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ABSTRACT

This course, one of 16 sequential courses comprising phase one of a part-time Bachelor of Arts degree program in Australian Studies, focuses on debates about Australia and Australian national character from 1788 to the present. It also introduces students to the forms of intellectual debate and the skills of essay writing. The course is designed for independent study combined with tutorial sessions. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the course and its study objectives. Chapter 2, "Australia Day: What is Being Celebrated?" deals with the problems of national identity. Chapter 3,"Inventing Australia: Establishing the Terms," deals with issues of nationalism. Chapters 4 and 5, "The Birth of a Culture" and "The Pursuit of an Australian Nation" consider the evolution of the national image. Chapter 6, "The Twentieth Century: In Defense of Australia," deals with image makers, the intelligentsia, and conflict over national identity. Chapter 7, "Conclusions: Analyzing the Debate," discusses the social context of Australian nationalism. Content and questions for three tutorial sessions are included; they introduce the purpose of tutorials, Australia Day and national character, and essay writing. Also included are lists of required readings, additional readings, a bibliography, and self-assessment questions. (IS)

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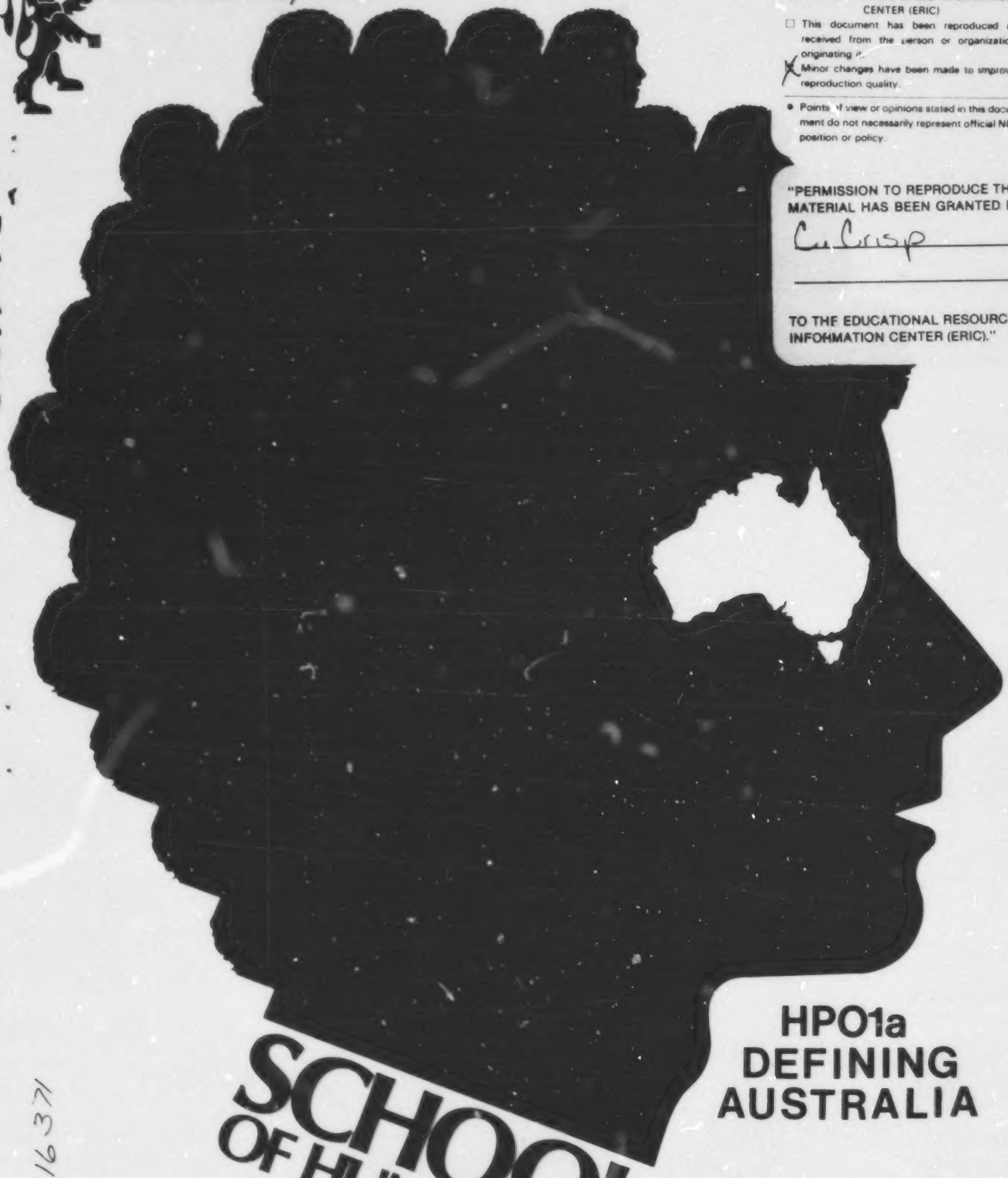

HPO1a DEFINING AUSTRALIA

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

SP 016 371

2

PART TIME BA DEGREE

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

PART-TIME BA DEGREE PROGRAMME

COURSE HP01a

DEFINING AUSTRALIA

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Acknowledgement

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COURSE INFORMATION: HP01a

Course readings

For this course you need to read the following book, which is available from the University bookshop:

Richard White, *Inventing Australia* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981) ($9.95)

Our reading of this book will constitute a central strand in this course, but you will also find it referred to in other courses in Phase 1, in particular in courses HP02a *The Bush Legend* and HP02b *Urban Australia*.

Some use will also be made of

Leon Cantrell ed., *The 1890s* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1977) ($7.95)

This book will be used extensively in course HP02a *The Bush Legend*.

In addition there are 19 numbered readings which accompany this study guide in the course package. Some of these readings are brief excerpts from longer pieces or books, some are complete articles - full bibliographical details appear at the beginning of each reading and in the bibliography. These readings are related to one another in ways which are explained in the study guide. Instructions on when to read particular items, and the purposes of your reading, should be followed closely, so that the direction of the course, and the relations between its parts, are as clear as possible.

If you want to follow up a particularly interesting piece, you will be able to find it in a library by using the bibliographical details provided. Most of these materials (books, journals, newspapers, etc.) are available in the Griffith University Library. However, you do not need to read anything beyond the contents of the course package in order to handle the course and its assessment satisfactorily. If you wish to explore further some of the themes and issues of the course, a short list of additional reading appears at the end of the study guide, purely for your own interest.

Tutorial activities

There are three tutorial activities listed in this study guide, on pp.33,53 and 69. Attendance at these tutorials is encouraged, but is not compulsory. As you will see, each of these tutorials is tailored to this introductory course by being related to urgent, practical matters - how to use the study guide, how to compare different viewpoints, pointers on reading, writing an essay. They will also provide

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opportunities for sorting out any difficulties you come across in the readings or the study guide, assistance with grasping the connections between readings more clearly, and practice in building up coherent arguments. Each of the tutorial activities requires some thought on your part before attendance - it would be useful for you to make brief notes to bring along for tutorial discussion.

Assessment

There is one assessment item for this course, which is designed to introduce you to the requirements of essay writing. You will be required to complete an essay for which a model, and the first two sections, are provided. Your contribution will amount to 1500-2000 words. You will find that it is necessary to work carefully through the study guide and readings before you are in a position to tackle the assessment item properly. Nonetheless, you might find it useful to look at it now, before you start (the assessment item can be found with the course readings). You will notice that it asks questions about images of Australia, and you may find it helpful to take notes which you feel will help answer those questions as you make your way through the course materials.

You should refer to the General Information Booklet for advice on submission dates and procedures for this assessment item.

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LIST OF READINGS

Readings are numbered in order of use, and aggregated according to the section of the study guide in which they first appear.

(Note: This list does not include readings from the purchased text books.)

Section 2 (pink cover)

Reading 1. Editorial, *Age* (excerpts)

Reading 2. Editorial, *Australian*

Reading 3. News report, *Age*

Reading 4. James Murtagh, 'Wanted: a national day'

Reading 5. News report, *Age* (excerpts) and news report, *Courier-Mail* (excerpts)

Section 3 (cream cover)

Reading 6. Raymond Williams, 'Nationalist' (excerpts)

Reading 7. George Orwell, 'Notes on nationalism' (excerpts)

Reading 8. Anthony Smith, 'The development of the national ideal' (excerpt)

Section 4 (yellow cover)

Reading 9. Manning Clark, 'The quest for an Australian identity' (part 1) (excerpt)

Section 5 (blue cover)

Reading 10. Raymond Crawford, 'The Australian national character: myth and reality' (excerpts)

Reading 11. Graeme Davison, 'Sydney and the bush: an urban context for the Australian Legend' (excerpt)

Reading 12. Charles Blackton, 'Australian nationality and nationalism 1850-1900'

Reading 13. Henry Lawson, 'I hear that our country's a nation at last'; Bernard O'Dowd, 'Where is Australia, singer do you know?'; A.D. Hope, 'Australia'

Section 6 (mauve cover)

Reading 14. Vance Palmer, 'The legend'

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Reading 15. Manning Clark, 'A letter to Tom Collins'

Reading 16. A.A. Phillips, 'The cultural cringe'

Reading 17. Humphrey McQueen, 'The suckling society' (excerpts)

Reading 18. Manning Clark, 'The quest for an Australian identity' (part 2) (excerpt)

Section 7 (orange cover)

Reading 19. Bill Gammage, 'Truth and tradition in Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea' (excerpt)

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PRELIMINARY EXERCISE

Before starting on the study guide, give some thought to this question and jot down notes on whatever occurs to you.

'What are the chief characteristics of Australia?'

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND ITS STUDY OBJECTIVES

Imagine that there has recently been an event (such as, say, Australia's victory in the America's Cup) which has generated a good deal of civic and national pride. Following it there has been a flurry of letters to the newspapers suggesting that 'God Save the Queen' should be replaced on all official occasions by 'Advance Australia Fair' or 'Waltzing Matilda' as the national anthem. You are in a conversation discussing the respective merits of each of these, and which one is more appropriate to Australia, when someone remarks: 'How are we to decide what is appropriate? Australia is an invention. It has no existence outside our imaginations and conversations. It can be whatever we want it to be.' What would be your response to such remarks? Could you simply shrug them off as bizarre? After all, living together in a community presumably involves some shared notion of what it is all about, and of who we (the people making up the community) are - doesn't it? We understand what giving our allegiance to the country means, surely - otherwise there would be no sense in rituals like national anthems. What if the next turn in the conversation, however, was for you to be asked: 'What is it, then, that a "more appropriate" national anthem is to be more appropriate to?' How would you characterise Australia?

Perhaps the preliminary exercise that you have just done has caused you to stop and think: just how easy is it to say what this country is all about? What do we mean when we say 'Australia'? The very fact that we have disputes about what might be a 'more appropriate' national anthem implies that some of us have different views, or interpretations, of the country than others. While you are thinking along these lines, consider the following passages:

> The versatility of his temperament, the readiness to contrive and plan, the power of initiative that answers readily the challenge of difficulty, the hopefulness born of impatience with the present and a vision of the beauty that might be made to blossom in the wilderness - all these characteristics of his are part of the enduring Australian spirit. (Northcott, 1968, p.19. Originally published 1918)

> In all directions stretched the Great Australian Emptiness, in which the mind is the least of possessions, in which the rich man is the important man, in which the school master and the journalist rule what intellectual roost there is, in which beautiful youths and girls stare at life through blind blue eyes, in which human teeth fall like autumn leaves, the buttocks of cars grow hourly glassier, food means cake and steak, muscles prevail, and the march of material ugliness does not raise a quiver from the average nerves. (White, 1958, p.38-39)

> Most Australian writers seem to find it impossible to come to grips with their own people. They caricature their fellow countrymen or idealize them for qualities most of them do not possess. (Horne, 1964, p.25)

As these differing comments suggest, there is a real problem in defining Australia and what it means to be Australian - our country is far from being something we can take for granted.

In this course we will pay a great deal of attention to how Australia and its people have been talked about. We will be concerned with the problems that arise in defining 'Australia' and, in the light of the different views we come across, with asking: 'How many "Australias"?'

Why deal with these problems in an introductory course? On one level, it is because questions about Australia will lead us to touch on a series of subsidiary questions about other topics, such as the nation, nationalism, national identity, tradition, myth, the nature of allegiance to a community or country, political groupings in the contemporary world, and so on. All of these are topics of significance in the humanities and social sciences, and most of them will arise again in one guise or another in later courses.

On another level, the course is concerned with how meaning is arrived at through debate. By discussing the ways different interpretations of Australia have been arrived at, it will be demonstrated that definitions of complex social matters are always subject to differing interpretations, and so meaning is continually a matter of debate. The 'right' definition of 'Australia' will never be arrived at. Our conceptions arise out of particular circumstances and serve particular needs at particular times. Our objective here, then, is with understanding the process of debate: such enquiry is characteristic of the humanities and social sciences.

On a third level, the course will present you with a series of readings, and will give you initial experience in textual comprehension and analysis - study skills that will develop further as you become increasingly involved in academic enquiry.

The course has a straightforward progression. First, the problem of definition is outlined through a discussion of Australia Day. Next, a series of key concepts used by commentators in discussing the problem of definition is examined (these are: nation, nationalism, national identity). Third, the differing uses to which these concepts have been put in interpreting 'Australia' at various points are examined. There is a unifying argument throughout this examination. This is:

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1. that 'Australia' has been understood mostly in terms of images which are used to give meaning to the abstract concepts of nation and nationalism (for instance, Australian national identity has been represented at different times through such images as the bushman or the digger);

2. that these images were produced by certain people with specific intentions; and

3. that these people were prompted to generate those images for reasons to do with particular social and historical circumstances (or context).

This framework - images, producers, contexts - gives our discussion an underlying structure. One of our objectives, as you will have seen in the note on assessment above, is for you to become well-enough acquainted with this framework to use it yourself in completing the essay by which you will be assessed at the end of this course.

Now let us begin.

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2 AUSTRALIA DAY: WHAT IS BEING CELEBRATED?

One way of starting this enquiry into 'Australia' is to see what people say about it at a time when they are explicitly encouraged to think about what it means. Australia Day, which is supposed to serve just this function, will provide a good starting point. Australia Day, 26 January, intended as a day of national celebration and a focus for our collective Australian consciousness, usually gives rise to a flurry of newspaper commentary. By glancing at the press coverage of this day for any year, you will find uncertainty about both the nature of the ceremony and exactly what it is that is being celebrated.

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Before looking at examples of such press commentary, pause here to jot down why Australia Day is celebrated on 26 January? What does that day represent?

****

2.1 Problems of Australia Day

One ground for comment has often been that Australians do not take their national day seriously enough. Typical of this is the first reading, an editorial from *Age*, which you should now read.

****

Read Editorial, *Age* (excerpts), reading 1.

****

Clearly, there are a number of assertions here that you might ponder: what evidence is there, for instance, that we think we have 'one of the best countries in the world'? Do you agree that the splitting of Australia Day in two necessarily detracts from the importance of the event? Is the fact that other countries make a big occasion of their national day a compelling reason for Australia to do so?

We also find here how an image of what Australians are like - 'not much given to outbursts of patriotism ... reluctant to make a public show' - is used to explain their behaviour. It will become apparent below that images of Australia and Australians are an important part of the debate over meaning.

Another point of interest is the idea that the landing at Sydney Cove 'is not calculated to stir the passions in the same way as storming the Bastille, winning a war of independence, or staging a people's revolution'. This has been a matter for frequent comment; for instance, an MP writing to the *Australian* on 8 February, 1982 remarked:

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> Our problem in choosing a date is that there is really not one outstanding event which can be said to mark the birth of Australia as a nation. (Groom, 1982, p.8)

A yearning for some key event in our past, an event 'calculated to stir passions', and about which national sentiment would naturally cohere, is suggested as the desirable object for the symbolic focus of a national day. Its link with the birth of the nation seems to be crucial. While the *Age* editorial implies that 26 January is the logical date to regard as marking our beginning, Groom's comment introduces some doubt. An editorial in the *Australian* of 1 February, 1982 is even more explicit: read that piece now.

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Read Editorial, *Australian*, reading 2.

****

The question of whether 26 January is in fact the right day is raised. At the heart of the issue is whether or not the national day reminds people of the unity of the nation. The argument in the editorial that 26 January may even be divisive rather than unifying implies that there may be another day which would better serve the purpose of arousing the same (unifying) sentiments in all of us. This is a key question to follow up. But first, notice that this editorial also identifies different constituent components of the nation - British settlers, the Aboriginal people, people of different states, non-British immigrants with 'no link with Britain's long-gone colonial activities' - all of whom presumably should be unified by an appropriate national day. The 1981 National Australia Day Committee itself recognised this diversity, but instead of proposing another day, proposed a change of emphasis in what we now celebrate on 26 January. You will find the committee's views in another excerpt from the *Age*, which you should now read.

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Read news report, *Age*, reading 3.

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What has happened here? First, it is clear that just as early conceptions of Australia Day were concerned with origins (the origins of white settlement in Australia), the 1981 committee also was concerned with origins - this time the origins of different waves of settlement. Each wave, we can assume, has different interests and perceptions - perhaps so diverse as to defy any attempt to reconcile them. (Surely, where the foundation point for one group marks the invasion point for another, reconciliation remains a ticklish problem.) What we share, however, is a common

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future: here are new grounds for unity. Instead of looking to the past, we are to remind ourselves of a common fate which should in turn reinforce the point of our nationhood. This recognition should stimulate the appropriate unifying sentiments of a national day in a way which an event in our past, about which there seems to be little consensus, no longer can.

Commentators on Australia Day, however, have not been satisfied by this ingenious solution - after all, as long as celebrations continue to be held on 26 January, there is some incentive for critics to point to other features of that day in 1788 - invading the Aborigines, convicts in chains - and to suggest that it is easier to feel outraged, or uncomfortable, than to rejoice in our nationality. So the preoccupation with whether 26 January is the right day has continued, with frequent suggestions (like that made in the *Australian* editorial noted above) that another day, commemorating another event in our past, might be more appropriate.

****

What do you think of these issues? Do you think another date would be more appropriate for Australia Day? If so, what day might it be? How did you select it?

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A long-time contender for the designation as the 'right' date for Australia Day is 1 January - the day on which the Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed in 1901. For instance, in a series of letters published in the *Australian* on 9 February, 1982, contributors made such suggestions as:

> Australia did not come into being as a nation until Federation on January 1, 1901. I feel this is the day we should be celebrating as Australia Day.

and:

> The logical day to me is January 1 - the anniversary of the day on which the colonies were federated under the name of the Commonwealth of Australia. That was the date on which we became a nation. We can all relate to that day.

This is not a new suggestion: the argument was rehearsed in full by James G. Murtagh 30 years ago in a brief article entitled 'Wanted: a national day' (reading 4). As you read through the article, you might find it helpful to jot down those points that reflect very similar concerns to those expressed by the newspaper columnists of the 1980s we have been reading.

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Read James Murtagh, 'Wanted: a national day', reading 4.

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Murtagh, in common with many of the writers above, sees Australia Day as a problem. Indeed, his first paragraph, identifying general indifference to the occasion, and the vexed issue of 'the long holiday weekend', might usefully be read again in conjunction with the first newspaper piece (reading 1). His reference to 'annual editorial laments', however, might prompt us to think about the way the debate in the press has been aired time and time again. Perhaps the whole debate is an obsession of newspapers? More seriously, if the same issues are debated every year, and have been for at least 30 years, does this mean that the debate can never be resolved? Does it tell us instead something about the difficulty of coming to terms with Australia Day or national days in general? Perhaps it tells us something about the process of debate: for instance, it might be that any position adopted in a debate (or argument) will prompt someone else to take up an alternative position, and this is why the debate continues to generate new variations and never ends? (It would help if you jotted down your thoughts on these matters here, but the last issue in particular is one to which we will return.)

Murtagh believes that Australia Day is celebrated on the wrong day, arguing that the convict settlement originating on 26 January, 1788 was completely replaced by a 'new nation' of pioneers with different values. Do you think this is a convincing argument? Even if you accept the notion of a new nation, there remains the question of what values were socially shared (if there were shared values), and what day would most appropriately prompt us to recognise and affirm those values? Murtagh is definite on both issues: Australia's 'real tradition' stands for 'the rights of the common man, the democratic liberties, a contempt for wealth and privilege, and the pursuit of social justice and equal opportunity for all'; and the date of the foundation of the Commonwealth, 1 January, 1901, best mirrors 'the real life, traditions and ideals of Australia'.

We might ask, first, what evidence is there that these are shared values? (For instance: Have you seen 'contempt for wealth and privilege'? Does Australia yet display a convincing concern for 'social justice and equal opportunity for all'?) More importantly, however, we should ask what evidence supports the contention that these are values specific to the Australian tradition? (The whole issue of just what a tradition is will be considered in the next course: HP01b *Traditions*.) A moment's reflection should remind us that just such values as these have been identified as characteristic of the philosophy of Western liberal democracy for 200 years, ever since the rights of

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the common man, democratic liberties, and equal opportunity were expressed in the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence at the end of the eighteenth century. Such values, therefore, are the heritage of a particular period of social and political history - covering many nations. They are not the outcome of the pioneers' experience of this particular country, as Murtagh seems to imply. This is not to suggest that we should not celebrate the democratic heritage. But do we have any grounds for taking up such general values as distinctive of the Australian experience? And does the celebration of those values tell us anything about this country?

Further, even if we ignore such problems as these, how does Murtagh move from his idea of the 'new nation' of pioneers to the assertion that 1 January best serves the purpose of national celebration? Simply by pointing out that upon the establishment of the Commonwealth, Australia became a 'new nation' in fact. Now this may indeed be an argument for celebrating 1 January as the national day, as correspondents to the *Australian*, noted above, suggested. But this is a simple argument, and has no logical connection with Murtagh's earlier discussion of emergent pioneer values - which presumably did not appear overnight in 1901 but emerged over a considerably longer period before that as free settlers became dominant. Murtagh's argument is a *non sequitur* (that is, his conclusion has no logical connection with his evidence). It is, however, important in revealing a real repugnance for convict origins, and a reluctance to register them as having any meaning for contemporary Australia - another point to which we will return in later discussion.

Murtagh believes that there is some essence, a core of shared values, that is unique to Australia, and which the Australia Day ceremony should mirror. The problem is that the current ceremony calls to mind values which - in his view - were completely superseded by the 'new nation' of pioneers. But his argument takes no account of the prior Aboriginal culture, or of the different cultural perspectives of successive waves of immigrants. Indeed, it is this feature which indicates that the article is dated: a concern for Aboriginal views, and then for what became known as 'multiculturalism' (the recognition that Australia contains groups from different cultural backgrounds, who retain differing cultural practices and perspectives), became much more dominant in the 1960s and 1970s.

The different strands of culture that make up multiculturalism have created difficulties for any sort of argument which proposes to explain 'Australia' in terms of national identity based on a core of shared values. You will recall Murtagh's reference to nationality as 'essentially a phenomenon of social psychology ... which moves a people to consider themselves as a community distinct from others' - in other words, to accept a common, or community, identity. Such a position is considerably

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easier to defend in a society which is racially and culturally homogeneous than in one where views are changing and where there are heterogeneous - perhaps even competing - cultural perspectives. Such changing, heterogeneous perspectives led to references to an identity crisis by the 1982 National Australia Day Committee, as you will find in the next two newspaper excerpts (reading 5).

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Read news reports, *Age* and *Courier-Mail* (excerpts), reading 5.

****

The problem here is that the notion of a single identity, perhaps appropriate in a homogeneous society ('our identity was pretty clear and simple 20 years ago'), is thrown into question by diversity. It seems significant, given what we noted about an image in reading 1 (see study guide, p.9), that commentators here seek to explain the distinction in terms of a change of image.

Certainly the Australia of 'meat pies, football, and Holden cars' may be distinct from the Australia of 'Lebanese rolls, soccer and Mitsubishi cars'. It may, too, be realistic to recognise that there are many identities in Australia rather than one. But should we simply accept that this leads to confusion? Perhaps we might equally as well question whether the notion of an Australian identity which is static and based on clearly recognised characteristics, was and is appropriate as a way of understanding 'Australia' in the first place. In any case, there is also the problem which Murtagh encountered of how one can lay claim to particular core values or characteristics as Australian - a problem which the cartoon on the next page addresses.

Referring back to reading 3, it might be suggested that the National Australia Day Committee seemed on a more fruitful path in 1981 (when it had different personnel), with its recognition that three waves of migration entailed three different cultural perspectives. Hence it emphasised the future rather than the past. Instead of being united about an 'essential' core or identity, we are encouraged to be united about a common future.

This gives us some purchase on our central query: 'How many "Australias"?', for if we accept that there are different cultural perspectives, we have to recognise that there are different meanings attached to 'Australia' by each cultural group. For the Aboriginal, whose people have been here for 50,000 years, 'Australia' will mean something different from what it means for the Anglo-Saxon, whose ancestors arrived within the last 200 years. Similarly, for the European post-war immigrant from a non-English speaking background, 'Australia' will be understood in a different way again. (This is not to mention the different

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IF YOU WANNA FIND THE TRUE AUSSIE IDENTITY Y' GOTTA GET RID OF ALL THESE FOREIGN INFLUENCES
THAT FOREIGN-LOOKIN' FLAG FOR A START...
THAT YANK CAR...
CHINESE TOWELLING HA!...
HONG KONG SHIRT...
SINGAPORE THONGS...
TAIWAN SHORTS...
AND YOUR POMMIE ANCESTORS
THAT LEAVES THE DINKY-DI AUSSIE IDENTITY....
'OWYER GOIN' MATE-ORRIGHT?

Source: *Australian* (1982) February 10, p.6

'Australias' indicated by reference to the land of 'meat pies, football, and Holden cars' versus one of 'Lebanese rolls, soccer, and Mitsubishi cars' in the newspaper excerpt above.) Should we take this to mean that what is meant by 'Australia' constantly changes? Certainly, to the extent that in historical terms different waves of migration meant that different groups, and different values, became dominant at different times, then 'Australia' may well have been understood differently in different periods. (This method of establishing a perspective on something across time is often described as diachronic in academic discussions.) But at the same time, to the extent that we accept multiculturalism, we may have to accept that there are contemporarily competing versions of 'Australia', such as the Aboriginal-Australian Australia, the Italo-Australian Australia, the Anglo-Saxon Australia. (This method of obtaining a perspective on different manifestations of something in any one period is often described as synchronic in academic discussions.)

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2.2 Indications of the underlying difficulties

One of the things that seems apparent in our discussion of the problems so far encountered is that commentators are wrestling with how to arrive at a sense of ceremony, and of 'Australia', that will have a unified meaning. Further, a single meaning on which we are all agreed is intended to promote a sense of our unity as a nation. Every reference to 'the nation', then, is in terms of unity; and nationality or national identity is (in Murtagh's words, for instance) 'a state of mind ... (which) moves ... people to consider themselves as a community distinct from others'. In other words, the impulse of the debate is that of unity, the rhetoric is that of 'the nation', and the goal is the establishment of boundary distinctions, a community distinct from others, a clear idea of what is Australian and what is not.

As we have seen, various people have put forward certain images of what they take 'Australia' or 'the Australian' to be: these images are intended to capture just such a unified meaning and to symbolise the boundary distinctions. (Why this enterprise is important is not yet clear. That it is important is evident in the persistence with which it has been pursued.) A difficulty with such images that became clear in our reading of Murtagh is how to establish that the images represent values that are distinctively Australian. In his case the ruling image was of 'the pioneer' building a new nation in the light of certain key values that he argued a national day should celebrate. Yet those values, we saw, were the common heritage of all Western democracies - they could not be used to distinguish between us and them (that is, between what is Australian and what is not). Another problem is that images have to be changed - the image of a land of 'meat pies, football, and Holden cars' is no longer appropriate in the circumstances of today. This indicates a crucial underlying difficulty: how to establish a unified meaning in the face of diversity - historical transitions that change the composition of national populations, competing cultural perspectives that entail different ways of understanding 'Australia', and so on.

If there is more than one understanding of 'Australia', if 'Australia' itself is so variable, then this may be why there continues to be so much debate about Australia Day: different commentators may be talking about different things, and without a common object of celebration it is not surprising that they fail to agree on the nature of the ceremony! To say this is not to suggest that there is no point to celebrations like Australia Day, since, as at least one recent committee has recognised, whatever the diversity of our pasts, we face common issues in the present, and a common future. In other words, we share a community of interests, and celebrations which encourage a recognition of this may well serve community purposes. The persistent reference to the past in discussions of Australia Day, however, will probably not be avoided: it seems tied up with

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a concern to establish traditions. Tradition will be the subject of your next course, course HP01b *Traditions*: for the moment it can be said that reference to a shared tradition is another way of signifying a boundary distinction between us (those covered by the tradition) and them (those whom the tradition provides a means of excluding). To the extent that both the traditions and the celebrations designed to foster them have something to do with common interests in the present, they serve the community: the properties of 'the community' will be discussed at length in course HP03a *Community and Identity*.

What is more important to our discussion here is to consider how to come to terms with 'Australia' at all if it is subject to such variation. One very interesting proposal raised in response to this concern is the suggestion that we regard 'Australia' as an invention which can only be understood by understanding the motives and the processes which lie behind it. This is the thesis put forward by Richard White in his book, *Inventing Australia*, which is one of the text books for this course. Before turning to it, let us pause to recapitulate the discussion so far.

2.3 Discussion questions: recapitulating the Australian case

At this point in the course, our review will take the form of a series of questions addressed to the key issues which have been covered. A series of answers (which you should feel free to elaborate on further, or to disagree with) are given here. At later points in this course, and in future courses, you will be asked similar questions - but answers will not be given immediately: you will be expected to write your own before checking with the answers at the back of the study guide. The purpose of such exercises, which we call Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs), is to encourage you to engage directly in the discussion and to develop your own responses. What follows, therefore, is an example (for future reference when confronting later SAQs) of what a series of responses to SAQs on the first part of this course might look like. None of these questions are designed as memory tests: it is intended that whenever you confront a question you should return to your notes, the readings, or the study guide to find the appropriate answer. Indeed, when you come to the proper SAQs, it will prove useful to read the questions before tackling the related readings so that you will have an idea of what to look for on your way through. Of course, your responses to SAQs will differ from the model below in that they need not be as detailed or as formal as those that appear here. These answers have to be understood by all who read this guide. Your answers are for your benefit alone - they can be as schematic and as informal as you like, as long as you take the exercises seriously.

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Q.: What are some of the chief problems typically mentioned when Australia Day is discussed?

A.: Undoubtedly the major feature of comment (and subject of perennial 'editorial laments') is that Australians do not take the event seriously enough, they do not display an enthusiasm commensurate with its importance. However, different arguments have been put forward to explain this supposed lack of enthusiasm, among them being:

(a) the splitting of the event, with 26 January being the date of formal celebration, but the following Monday being marked as a public holiday. This disperses our attention instead of encouraging us to focus on Australia Day's meaning.

(b) lack of a key event, or a compelling event (like the storming of the Bastille), that would 'stir our passions' and mark precisely the 'birth' of the nation. People are not sufficiently moved by (may be even put off by) the arrival of the convict fleet as the foundation of British settlement, and so will not celebrate it.

(c) the 'wrong' day being celebrated (frequently connected with the argument in (b), above, for obvious reasons). The 'real' birth of contemporary Australia took place when Federation was proclaimed on 1 January, 1901, and that is the date we should observe.

(d) people are confused. They have lost a sense of common core values, or of a shared national identity, and so have little motive to celebrate Australia Day.

Q.: Are national days best regarded as anniversaries or symbols?

A.: There is not one clear answer to this, but it is evident that the celebration of 26 January as Australia Day persists primarily as an anniversary (of the British landing in 1788), since there is considerable disagreement about what it symbolises for contemporary Australia. Much of the discussion of a possible alternative national day seems motivated by a desire for a more appropriate symbol. For instance, Murtagh's nomination of Federation Day, 1 January, certainly represents the anniversary of the proclamation of the Commonwealth, but it is more important for him because it mirrors best 'the real tradition' of Australia: it is a more effective symbol. (Similarly, for former senator Neville Bonner, it symbolises the day we 'threw off our shackles'.)

Q.: What values have been suggested as being typical of Australians?

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A.: Writers of press editorials have suggested that Australians are hedonistic (they prefer to concentrate on enjoying the public holiday rather than on any formal celebration) or, alternatively, patriotic, but reluctant to make a public show. These assertions appear to be at odds - in any case usually no evidence is offered in support of either of them. Murtagh suggests that the values of the new nation involve the rights of the common man, contempt for wealth and privilege, democratic liberties, pursuit of social justice, and equality for all. But these appear to be values common to the philosophy of liberal democracy in all Western nations since the Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century, and so tell us little about the Australian experience. In recent years, the whole issue of typically Australian values has been thrown into question with the recognition of successive waves of migration and contemporary multiculturalism suggesting that there may be different views derived from different pasts and different cultural bases. Whether this means the breakdown or diminution of 'national identity', the emergence of a new identity (recognising different strands), or indeed competing versions of 'Australia', remains unresolved.

Q.: On what bases might it be argued that there are different 'Australias'?

A.: First, taking a historical viewpoint, it seems, for instance, that the 'Australia' of the Aborigines (with their unique visions of country and society) was a different 'Australia' from that understood by predominantly British settlers (with their European visions of country and society) between 1788 and the present. But even within the white community, understandings of 'Australia' may have altered radically - for instance, after about 1830 when free-born immigrants became dominant (superseding convicts and their administrators); roughly after 1870 when the native-born outnumbered immigrants; and again after 1945 with the large influx of immigrants from diverse, non-English speaking cultures.

Second, taking a contemporary perspective, it seems that distinctive views of 'Australia' may be held by different cultural groups. There are, conceded the Chairman of the Australia Day Committee, many identities in Australia - no longer is there a unified national identity (if there ever was). By extension, the view of 'Australia' common to a group of people with a particular cultural identity may not be shared across the whole community. Thus it would make sense to talk of, say, the Italo-Australian Australia, the Aboriginal-Australian Australia, the Anglo-Saxon Australia, and so on. Even within the dominant cultural group, whites of British descent, there is a distinction between those who see 26 January, 1788 as the primary

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event in our national life (and who presumably see 'Australia' in terms of links with an 'older' culture - a dependent component in a broader British cultural grouping), and those who see the proclamation of the Commonwealth in 1901 as the 'birth' of the nation (therefore emphasising 'Australia' as something unique, something having distinctive qualities and an independent cultural life). Such attitudes too, we might argue, imply different 'Australias'.

Q.: What appear to be common difficulties that characterise all of the problems of Australia Day?

A.: The chief difficulty is that a national day implies celebration of something common to us all, it must therefore have a unified meaning, and yet a unified meaning is seemingly beyond attainment. Competing understandings of 'Australia' derived from different historical periods or different cultural perspectives, changing circumstances that make images that once appeared fruitful redundant, and so on - these are evidence of this difficulty. Another difficulty is that of identifying values or characteristics that are distinctively Australian - Murtagh's attempt, for instance, foundered on the fact that the values he wished to celebrate were of little use in establishing boundary distinctions, since they were common to the Western democratic heritage. In that 'Australia' is an offshoot of a larger English-speaking cultural grouping, it is inevitable that any characterisation of it will draw something from this broader milieu: the dilemma will probably be how and in what proportions to combine the (necessary) elements of the larger English-speaking tradition with the (distinctive) elements of life in this country in arriving at images of 'Australia'.

We leave this section with at least two outstanding issues to be taken up in future discussion: the matter of whether repugnance towards convict origins and reluctance to register such origins as meaningful for contemporary Australia (as shown by Murtagh) indicates something crucial about the way 'Australia' has been understood; and the practical matter of whether reiterating (or failing to resolve) the debate over Australia Day tells us something more general about the process of debate.

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3 INVENTING AUSTRALIA: ESTABLISHING THE TERMS

3.1 An argument introduced

We turn now to what is to be the primary text for this course, Richard White's *Inventing Australia*. This is a recent attempt to cover the development of the debate over the idea of 'Australia'. It will serve as a reference point for our discussion. We will use it as a jumping-off point for our movement out into the other readings which will take up key issues in more detail, or which will propose alternative points of view.

A common technique in books and articles which seek to establish a particular point of view is to commence with a brief preliminary statement of central ideas and propositions: we may call these the terms of the argument. This, you will recognise, is the staple of any debate - participants advance propositions, and then we judge them on how effectively they support their case. As you turn to Richard White's brief Introduction, where the central argument (or thesis) of the book is indicated, you should pay particular attention to the terms of the argument - note especially emphasised words and ideas, and try to isolate main propositions. When we reach the end of the book, you may want to return to this starting point and ask whether White has successfully established the case he sets out here.

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Read Richard White, 'Introduction', *Inventing Australia*, pp.viii-x.

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At this point, it is useful to paraphrase and analyse these few pages closely as an example to you of how you might start to analyse later chapters and articles yourself. (Such preliminary work will be left increasingly to you as the course proceeds.)

It is immediately apparent that the key words for White's discussion are nation, national identity and invention. His thesis can be summarised in terms of four propositions:

- 'Australia' is not primarily a place, it is a system of ideas - an intellectual construct. (p.viii, para. 2)

- the core of this construct is a 'national identity' supposed to capture the essential meaning of national life, and invented by an intelligentsia (writers, artists, journalists, historians, critics) in terms of a framework of Western ideas particular to

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European history at a specific time. (p.ix, paras 1 and 2)

- the intelligentsia are influenced in this process of invention by owing patronage to powerful economic interests (a broad ruling class) whose purposes are best served by preservation of the current status quo. (p.ix, para.3)

- the process of invention is continuous: because groups outside the ruling class can develop alternative images, and because (more importantly) the ruling class itself is not always united but contains powerful competing economic interests, 'the national identity is continually being fractured, questioned, and redefined'. (bottom p.ix and p.x)

Because of this process of redefinition, there will be a succession of different 'Australias' reflecting the rises and falls in influence of competing economic groups. As manufacturers, say, gain dominance over pastoralists, pressure to stress those features of national life that are closest to their interests will be translated into new ideas or images of 'Australia' by the intelligentsia.

Such an approach immediately offers us rich possibilities for reinterpreting the earlier discussion of 'Australia Day'. At once there is a rationale for the phenomenon of many 'Australias'. And if, as White asserts, there is no 'real' Australia waiting to be uncovered, then it may seem that much of that debate - founded as it is on disputes about a celebration that would most accurately reflect an underlying 'real' Australia - is pointless, and will never be resolved. However, the debate is far from pointless, for we might describe the discussions and competing definitions of 'Australia' initiated each Australia Day (primarily by journalists - a group White classifies as part of the intelligentsia) as part of the very process of invention, producing new meanings to suit changing circumstances. One of the questions left outstanding at the end of the last section concerned the continuity of the debate over Australia Day: we see now - if we accept White's argument - that there can never be a final resolution, since the object that is supposedly celebrated, 'Australia', is subject to continual redefinition. The process of invention (of which the Australia Day debate is one component) is, as we noted, continuous.

White also provides a comment that can be used to refine ideas we raised in section 2.2. We spoke there about the properties of certain images that cropped up in discussions of Australia Day, noting that these images seemed intended to indicate the unity of the nation, and to mark off the boundaries between what is Australian and what is not. White remarks that the adequacy of such images is not in question - we should not be concerned with whether what they represent is true or false, but 'what their function is,

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whose creation they are, and whose interests they serve'. Ideas or images of national identity are produced by people with specific purposes in mind. Our sense of this, arrived at in 2.2, can be tightened up in the light of White's assertions to provide a framework for future use in discussing such images - we must look at images not just with respect to what they represent or symbolise, but also with respect to the circumstances or conditions that demanded new images, and with regard to those who produced the images and what their intentions were.

The terms 'nation' and 'national identity', so crucial to White's argument, are familiar from section 2 - they were the very stuff of the discussion of Australia Day. We saw there that they were mainly used in an effort to assert unity of sentiments (and a unified meaning). White agrees on the unifying intention of nationalist rhetoric, but argues that such unity always serves special interests. Thus, he recasts such terms as 'nation' and 'national identity' to suggest that they be understood as elements in the process of 'invention' which goes on as different groups jockey for influence in society, and push forward images or ideas that will make their ambitions appear legitimate.

In our earlier discussion we used these terms in a commonsense way: that is, we assumed that there was a more or less fixed and commonly understood (or received) meaning. White's strategy, by shifting off the familiar ground, should prompt us to consider more closely how we organise our discussion. We may take note of the lead White gives in alerting us to the fact that the ideas under discussion derive from 'a framework of modern Western ideas ... a product of European history at a particular time'. Ideas, and the words we use to signify them, have their own histories.

3.2 Defining 'nationalism'

One writer who has attempted to clarify the process of debate about culture and society by drawing attention to the history of the meanings of words we use is Raymond Williams. He elaborates for us the framework of ideas and the historical context of 'nation' and its derivatives which we may set beside White.

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Read Raymond Williams, 'Nationalist' (excerpts), reading 6.

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Williams is engaged in etymology - accounting for the formation of a word and the development of its meanings - on the premise that our understanding of current usage will be enhanced by understanding something of the origins of the word and any lingering traces of former meanings and usages.

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In this sense, we might regard White's book as an etymological analysis of 'Australia'.

One feature of Williams's account of 'nationalist' that provides an interesting lead for us is the matter of dating. First, 'nation' and 'national' - like much of the terminology we use to discuss culture and society - were first used in a political sense in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (that is, during the Enlightenment). Coincidentally, these developments parallel the first settlement of Australia. You might keep this in mind and ponder how the emergence of the distinctively modern ways of talking about society generally affected the development of particular ideas about modern Australia. Second, note that the idea of nationalism became common in the mid-nineteenth century, that is to say at roughly the same time that the number of white, native-born Australians came to equal the number of immigrants (the native-born became numerically dominant in the 1870s). Around this time both the native-born, and those who felt their future to be bound up with the new country, began to seek a means of distinguishing colonial society in a positive way from the British mainstream. The tool that came to hand for this purpose was nationalism. There is something of a paradox here, since those who identified with the colony were looking for a way of making a break (or establishing a boundary distinction) from the 'old country', in a distinctively Australian way, and yet the means of doing this came not through something particular to Australia, but through concepts that were current in England at that time. In other words, though concepts of nation and nationalism could be used to assert distinctions, their use confirmed dependence upon European intellectual currents. Something supposedly new - an indigenous culture - could only be understood in terms of the shared Western framework of ideas. This is another way of casting the dilemma referred to at the end of the last discussion question in section 2.3. A national identity, as White pointed out in the passage you have looked at, is not '"Born of the lean loins of the country itself" ... but is part of the "cultural baggage" which Europeans have brought with them'.

Most of the contemporary discussion of Australia as a nation has been in terms of a political formation (that is to say, a politically organised and unified grouping) which Williams notes is the predominant modern sense. But the sense of a 'racial group' should not be ignored - persistent emphasis on 'British stock', the arrival of the 'first fleet' as the moment of 'our birth', the exclusion of the Aboriginal population from political participation in the society and the denial of their rights, the 'White Australia' policy from the 1890s until the early 1970s - all suggest the importance that has been given to the racial (indeed, racist) connotations of nationalism.

Williams refers to the uses of the concepts of nation and nationalism as a means of mobilising subject groups

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politically within a country. In other words, these concepts have been used to persuade people in a country (say, India in the nineteenth century) controlled by an outside political grouping (in India's case, England) that they have unified common interests, and should resist (mobilise against) such outside control. Such uses remind us of the impulse fostered by Australian nationalists to assert a distinctive identity in the face of British (or, after the Second World War, American) dominance. But perhaps more important has been the sense of 'the nation' to mean the whole people of a country, given that Australia is a federation of formerly discrete colonies. Hence, the growing debate over Australian 'nationalism' in the nineteenth century included attempts to persuade the people of all the colonies that they had shared interests that transcended colonial boundaries. Indeed, contemporary emphasis on 'nationalism' can be understood as reasserting this argument. It is reasserted because, first, states' rights issues (particularly in Queensland, where the issue of 'Queensland rights' versus Canberra's 'encroachments' is a familiar topic), and, second, the 'many identities' existing in national life, are seen as antagonistic to the 'whole people, common interests' concept.

When people talk of 'the nation' to imply the whole people of a country - without reference to the 'many identities' or diverse interests within it - they are encouraging us to accept what Williams calls 'the persuasive unitary sense' of 'the nation': much of the Australia Day discussion exemplified the way in which reference to the nation implicitly encouraged us to forget our differences. But this also calls to mind White's discussion of how ruling interests have made use of nationalism to disguise divisions in society, and hence to persuade us that the status quo is in the interests of us all ('the national interest'). What is at the heart of this is that nationalism calls on us not only to forget our differences, but also to give such allegiance to the broad political grouping that there is reluctance to question the status quo. In fact, White argues, some groups are always better served by the status quo than others, but the disadvantaged groups are prevented from realising this fully by their sense of allegiance to the nation - to question the status quo would be divisive, implying that we are not a whole people. Hence, most of the people in a country are easily persuaded that the claims of particular, identifiable groups within a country are merely sectional and 'selfish' and against 'the national interest', as Williams points out.

If we look at Williams and White together, we can see that they agree that the terms 'nation' and 'nationalism' are commonly used to persuade people to feel united and to act together. The problem is to decide whether such 'persuasive unitary' uses have positive or negative effects. This will depend very much on personal opinion. From one point of view nationalism may be regarded positively when it is seen as a way of persuading a group within a country (or

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'political formation') to oppose external control or oppression to protect their 'national rights'. Of recent times, for instance, Polish nationalism has been represented by Western newspaper commentators as a virtue, and as justifying a movement against the government of that country, which is seen as under the control of Russia. Similarly, 'nationalism' may be a movement which opposes imperialist exploitation. Or, as in Australia, the sense of being 'the whole people' of a country may be a step towards overcoming the economic inefficiencies of colonial fragmentation, and a step towards cultural distinctiveness as against simple derivativeness (second-hand Britishness) - at least these uses of the term 'nationalism' are familiar in discussions of Australian history. Alternatively, 'nation' and 'nationalism' may be employed in ways intended to evoke exclusivist - even racist - attitudes. They may also be used to persuade us to subordinate the selfish interests of our own group to the common interests of the whole country. This, White foreshadows, is the intention of most constructions of 'Australia'.

SAQ 1

In what ways does Murtagh use 'nation' and 'nationalism' in his article, 'Wanted: a national day' (reading 4)?

When you have written the answer to this SAQ, you can check your response by referring to the answer given on p.77.

3.3 For and against nationalism

We may take as a benchmark for negative accounts of nationalism George Orwell's 'Notes on nationalism', written in 1945 towards the end of the Second World War. The date is significant here: Orwell (and many others) saw the major wars of this century as the corollary of the rise of nationalism. Orwell's argument is intensely polemical, intended to dispute the neutral or positive connotations of nationalism in the strongest possible terms (appropriately, the article first appeared in a journal called *Polemic*).

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Read George Orwell, 'Notes on nationalism' (excerpts), reading 7.

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In Orwell's terms, nationalism serves, above all, to make things appear misleadingly simple. It does this first by a crude classification which ignores individuals

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altogether, and attributes singular qualities, such as 'good' or 'bad', to whole peoples. Secondly, large and pressing problems within and between countries can never be resolved because their particularity is ignored by the generalisations of nationalism - 'an enormous mouth bellowing the same lie over and over again'. Thirdly, once people define themselves in nationalist terms, they are prone to become viciously partisan instead of realistic and reasonable in disputes, and 'the intellectual decencies vanish'. Clearly, he suggests, this process of classification and of identification simplifies reality to the extent of distorting it entirely, and precludes the avenues of discussion, negotiation, and compromise in social life. (Other questions on classification will be discussed in courses HP08a *Classifications* and HP08b *Disciplines*.)

You will notice that Orwell indicates that nationalism involves a process of naming, or classification. Nomenclature - that is, the set of words and terms associated with a particular idea - is crucial to the clarification of the nationalist identification. This strikes a chord with respect to White's attention to just what it is that 'Australia' names (and with our discussion of just what it is that is at the heart of Australia Day).

Another element of Orwell's discussion which is congruent with our interests is the assertion that because the nationalist is indifferent to reality, denying those aspects which do not suit his needs, he believes the past can be altered, and history can be rewritten. Thus, Orwell suggests another process which might account for the proliferation of 'Australias': image-makers with a stake in a particular version of the national identity will rewrite the past (or ignore those aspects which don't serve their purposes) in constructing their images. Such an impulse may be seen to underlie the nationalist rewriting of Australian history that (like Murtagh's) denies the importance and meaning of convict origins - another of the issues we left unresolved at the end of the last section.

The main problem with the Orwell's diatribe against nationalism is that it doesn't explain why it has been so popular. If nationalist movements have been the disaster that he suggests, why have people been persuaded so readily of the desirability of assuming a national identity? Part of the answer is surely that Orwell's conception of nationalism is so all-encompassing and so utterly one-sided. The early distinction he draws between patriotism and nationalism enables him to ignore any of the possible 'good' things that might easily be said in favour of nationalism; such values as loyalty, community, self-sacrifice, and so on can be left unmentioned presumably because they fall into the category of patriotism, of which Orwell seems to approve.

Other views of nationalism certainly exist, however, and we can go some way towards balancing Orwell's polemical bias

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by reading a very different kind of discussion by a British sociologist, Anthony D. Smith, on the historical emergence and development of what he calls the national 'ideal'.

Like White and Williams, Smith is interested in the concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism' as well as the particular political developments they describe. His central term, 'the national ideal', is one we have not encountered before. It simply means 'the nation', considered as the ideal (i.e. the best, the most reasonable and natural) political and social unit. It is thus more or less interchangeable with 'nationalism', though Smith himself does not equate them, and relates the latter to the former as 'a programme of action to achieve and sustain the national ideal'.

While reading the Smith excerpt, you should clarify his argument for yourself by highlighting or underlining key phrases and sentences. Since you can't be sure which are the really 'key' items until you've read the whole piece, it might be worth marking as you go everything that reads like a definition, or a summarising statement, or an important topic sentence. In addition, you should number the items in any lists of points or characteristics you come across. These exercises should assist with comprehension generally, and should help, in particular, to extract what is most relevant to our concerns.

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Read Anthony Smith, 'The development of the national ideal' (excerpt), reading 8.

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Having read the piece you should now attempt the following SAQ. It is purely a test of comprehension, and should give you no trouble if you have read and marked the reading carefully. The answers can be found at the back of the study guide.

SAQ 2

1. When and where did the first clear statement of the 'national ideal' occur?

2. How does Smith define the 'national ideal'?

3. What are the four characteristics, according to Smith, of the 'national ideal' or 'nationalism'?

4. In Smith's account, how is nationalist culture distinctive in its attitude to the past?

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Smith's analysis of the national ideal goes some way towards answering the question which Orwell's tirade left unanswered, namely, why is nationalism so appealing? The suggested answer is that it fulfils people's need for a sense of collective identity - which may remind us that White introduces the concept of national identity in his Introduction. Check back over your copy of the Smith reading to see if any of the sentences you marked is about national identity. If not, find and mark them now. You will notice that the process of individual self-identification with the nation is considered under two aspects: identification through a perceived relationship to one's ancestors and forebears, and to the events that shaped their character (R8:2), and identification through solidarity based on territory, that is, a 'homeland'. These are not necessarily the only modes of national identification - others might include the solidarity born of political or military action in a nationalist cause - but they are clearly among the most important.

A second point to emphasise in the Smith reading is its characterisation of nationalist culture as a 'culture of the role of the unique event that shapes the national character' (R8:2). What this highlights, from our viewpoint, is the lack of any such 'unique event' in Australia's past; indeed, as you will recall, this is the very point at issue in the press debate over Australia Day.

The Smith reading is not as openly polemical as the Orwell reading. You might notice, in this connection, that Smith does not make the rather dubious distinction between nationalism and patriotism that Orwell insists upon; for Smith the 'love of country', or patriotism, is simply one manifestation of the national ideal. But we should not be misled by the more measured and judicious tone of the Smith reading into thinking that he does not have his own political axe to grind. It may be true that Orwell's separation of patriotism from nationalism is a sign of his anti-nationalist bias, enabling him to lash out at nationalist excesses without seeming to attack the patriotic virtues. But it is no less true that in refusing to separate what are surely two sides of the one coin, Smith shows a marked pro-nationalist bias; he is able to dwell on the superficially valuable and desirable aspects of the national ideal, without acknowledging the negative consequences with which Orwell is preoccupied.

Smith's pro-nationalist stance, then, is a good deal less obvious than Orwell's anti-nationalist stance, but no less real. It informs the very nature of his argument both here and in his book as a whole, which is that nationalism is the most flexible and adaptable of all modern ideologies or belief systems. He speaks of its 'protean ability to remain constant through all its transformations, in the teeth of the various challenges it has had to meet from other faiths and ideals' (R8:1). This could be taken as a purely objective history of nationalism rather than

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pro-nationalist advocacy, but two considerations point us towards the latter alternative. The first is the consistently 'heroic' role given to the national ideal in Smith's narrative: it figures, in almost anthropomorphic [i.e. human-like] terms, as an embattled but resourceful survivor against the mighty challengers such as Fascism, Racism and Communism. This is merely a recurrent rhetorical device, but it is a revealing one. A more substantial indicator of Smith's pro-nationalist advocacy is the form of his argument as a whole. This will not be immediately apparent from the short excerpt you have read, but you may be able to infer his general position, which is that nationalism has entered into temporary alliances with such forces as fascism, racism and communism without losing its own identity. The unstated corollary of such an argument is that nationalism is not really responsible for the crimes committed in its name by adherents of nationalist versions of those other doctrines - e.g. Nazism or Stalinism. In other words, whatever the historical validity of Smith's argument, one of its effects is to insulate nationalism itself from Orwellian attacks by denying its responsibility, as nationalism, for the evils under attack.

3.4 The common ground between opponents and proponents of nationalism

For Smith, the national ideal provides a valued means for each member of society to satisfy his or her need for a sense of collective identity. By accepting a particular vision of the world and identifying with a specific culture and a particular homeland, each individual is able to realise a range of political and personal aspirations. Both Orwell and White would probably agree that such needs and aspirations are present in most people, and that nationalism satisfies them, but both would argue that the consequences are detrimental to society. In Orwell's case such satisfactions, whatever their benefit at the group level, will be undesirable at the individual level because they act as a substitute for confrontation with reality as a fully responsible individual. In White's terms, it might be argued that identification with a unified national interest disguises the real divisions among the constituent groups of a society - at the extreme, preventing exploited groups from recognising the extent of their disadvantage.

In summary, White, Williams, Orwell, and Smith agree on one thing: that nationalism functions to unify and facilitate the organisation of a large political grouping (usually associated with a particular country). Williams perhaps sees this simply as the corollary of modern forms of political organisation. Smith has a positive view - from his perspective, the social benefits and psychological satisfactions that flow from a sense of national identity outweigh the pursuit of individual ends. Orwell, in contrast, sees commitment to the larger group as preventing

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the individual realising the best ends for himself. White, like Orwell, regards nationalism as disguising aspects of our life; unlike him, he ignores individuals and stresses instead that what is thus obscured are the social divisions that do exist, and that some groups gain disproportionate benefits from the status quo. In short, there is agreement on the functions of nationalism, but strong disagreement about its effects.

We have examined positive and negative interpretations of the uses of 'nation' and 'nationalism' and have acquired some understanding of 'national identity'. This is an appropriate point to resume our discussion of the invention of 'Australia'.

SAQ 3

What is the chief distinction between the views of Richard White and Anthony Smith on the issue of 'national identity'?

3.5 Review of progress

Up to this point in the course, there has been considerable attention given to paraphrasing the argument, and the significant content, in the passages you have read. The intention has been to acquaint you with methods of getting the essentials of a reading (recognizing central concepts, identifying main principles) and with selecting material most pertinent to a particular interest or channel of enquiry. You have also been given examples of questions which might be addressed to readings and have tried your hand at the first two SAQs (you probably felt your answers were little more than an elaboration of the commentary you had already read). We can assume, I think, that you are now prepared to engage directly with the readings, and so from this point the study guide will change to a questioning mode, in order to encourage you to work through the debate and to allow the readings to carry the argument. What, then, is the argument?

Perhaps it is useful here to review our progress and to give a synopsis of what is to come. We have seen (in sections 1 and 2) that defining 'Australia' is a difficult task, and that 'Australia' is, and has been, understood in different ways. Most of the discussion has been in terms of 'nation', 'nationalism' and 'national identity', and we have learnt that such rhetoric functions to produce a unified meaning, and one which is intended to command allegiance and mark boundaries. It was evident, however, (section 2) that there is difficulty in maintaining such a unified meaning - it is a matter of continual debate. And while there is

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agreement on the functions of nationalism (and related concepts), there is profound disagreement on its effects (see last paragraphs of 3.2 and 3.4).

Though meanings (definitions) change, the debate that gives rise to meanings is continuous, and it is this aspect to which we now turn our attention. White represents the contest over 'Australia' as being between competing economic groups who successively influence the ways in which images of 'Australia' and 'the Australian' are produced. Whether or not that is the case, it serves as a useful reminder that the constants in the debate will be concepts of nation and nationalism and the images intended to symbolise them. This gives rise in turn to the framework of images (what is represented), context (the circumstances or conditions which led to the generation of certain images), and producers of images (the people behind them, and their purposes) (see pp.8,27).

In section 4 below we will gain a clearer sense of a dilemma that has already been suggested (see pp.23,29): that is, that the people of a society deriving from a larger culture remain preoccupied with how to combine the broader cultural heritage with what they feel to be distinctive to themselves in establishing boundary distinctions. The argument of sections 5 and 6 will be that this dilemma, particular to the Australian case, is at the centre of the nationalist debates, and of competing interpretations of 'Australia', but that the process is usefully understood in terms of images, context, and producers of images.

As you turn back to Richard White's book, you will notice one feature that is particularly helpful: at the end of each chapter there is a brief passage giving the gist of what has been argued in the chapter. You will find this useful as a means of clarification, and a cumulative summary of the text, but you will also find that the summaries lack the sort of detail you will need to answer the SAQs. Nonetheless, they can be used as an index for retrospective delving into chapters. Remember the point that SAQs are not intended as memory tests: they are designed to take you back to readings to look for particular things.

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TUTORIAL ONE

A general point about tutorials is that you will probably find them more useful if you have covered the material in the study guide up to where the tutorial occurs. But do not hold up your work on succeeding sections until a session is scheduled: forge ahead! If you do not intend to come to a tutorial, you will often find it helpful to give some thought to the questions proposed for discussion, and to carry out any exercises.

1. Using the study guide

   This tutorial provides an opportunity to meet and discuss issues and problems early on in the course. We will look at:

   (a) handling the course materials (transitions from guide to readings)

   (b) dealing with SAQs (note taking, and when you should look up the answer!)

   (c) the study guide as a guide to attention.

2. Understanding the debate

   In this tutorial we shall also consider the outlines of the discussions of Australia Day, and consider ways of comparing the Williams, Orwell, and Smith readings. It would be helpful if you note down any problems or queries you have concerning the first sections of the course, and bring them along to this tutorial.

4 THE BIRTH OF A CULTURE

We discover in this section that the first images of Australia, based on little information, were the product of imagination stimulated by European preoccupations. While the view from afar even after Australia was settled continued to be shaped by British preoccupations and material needs, those who settled the colony had incentives to develop new images that were in accordance with their experience of the new country, and with their view of their positions within it. The settlers, however, carried with them the images from the dominant culture, so the quest for new images was not merely a struggle against the imposition of external British ideas, but a struggle within themselves.

4.1 'Australia imagined' and 'Australia experienced'

You will find on reading White's first chapter, 'Terra Australis Incognita', that even before Europeans settled on this continent, there were ideas of the country that was to be called Australia, formed not by reference to the scanty details available but as a result of various European currents of thought. Further, these ideas served specific functions in European social life by confirming particular intellectual orientations.

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Read White, chapter 1, 'Terra Australis Incognita', pp.1-15, and then complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 4

1. What were some of the influences on ideas of Australia prior to European settlement? (You should be able to distinguish at least three.)

2. Aborigines were seen by Europeans as representatives of 'natural man', but this generated two quite different views. What were they? (See especially pp.14-15.)

3. How did the transition of Aborigines from being representative Australians to being peripheral to 'Australia' come about? (Note pp.14-15.)

Clearly, at this early stage Australia was understood in a way which served the purposes of Europeans in Europe. The debates about the forms of economic life, the nature of man, religion, and so on, included certain ideas which could be

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used in describing 'Australia' - as you saw. However, quite practical circumstances led to the British decision to settle Australia. The most familiar representation of these circumstances is that Britain needed to find a 'quick way to relieve her cluttered gaols' and that 'Australia was ... chosen merely to solve a domestic problem' (Murtagh). This explains the contention that Australia was initially simply a 'dumping ground for those who had gone against the established social order' (White).

Some historians have suggested more positive motives for the settlement, such as a desire to open up trade with Asia and the Pacific, or to gain access to strategic raw materials, or to open a new frontier for economic development. (This question will be pursued at greater length in course HP07a *Penal Colony 1*.) But whatever the case, it remains that British settlement of this country was undertaken by convicts and their administrators and guardians. And White argues persuasively that the fact of convict colonisation - no matter what other intentions were involved at government level - had clear effects on how 'Australia' was seen generally, both by Europeans and by its inhabitants.

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Read White, chapter 2, 'Hell upon earth', pp.16-28, and complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 5

1. What was the dominant view in Britain of Australia after the initial penal settlement? What social purposes did such a view serve?

2. How did this view influence the inhabitants of the colony? (See particularly pp.24-28.)

3. On what grounds does White suggest that the British projected on to Australia characteristics which they did not wish to admit to be part of British life?

What we discover in this chapter is that industrious use continued to be made in Britain of particular images of Australia. Such images served principally as a means of controlling working-class crime, and also as an avenue for projecting the undesirable features of the British social order on to some far-away place. But once there was a body of European inhabitants of Australia, it was in their interests (for self-respect, if nothing else) to foster a more positive image of Australia and to contest the British

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view. Very early, then, we find a conflict between British-image 'Australia' (serving social purposes in Britain), and colonial-image 'Australia' (since the colonists inevitably strove for certain ends within the colony, such as how to articulate the harsh experience of settling an unfamiliar land, ends which were irrelevant to British life).

The colonists' impulse to find new images was to do with clarifying their view of themselves (and with their striving for self-respect). This is indicated by the distinction between their image, which is to do with the people (the 'currency' generation - see White, pp.24-28), and the British image, which is to do with the place and the system ('hell upon earth'). Another way of marking the difference is to note that the purposes behind the British image were primarily social, and secondarily economic, while the purpose of the image generated by the colonists was to mark boundary distinctions - to develop the seeds of the idea of 'being Australian', and of how that differed from being British. Already, then, we begin to see how context (being in Britain and imagining Australia versus experiencing life in Australia) and purpose or intended function (social control versus self-definition) give rise to quite different images. We also see competing groups of image-makers - administrators and spokespersons of the middle class in Britain; colonial leaders, local capitalists hoping to attract labour, and intellectuals hoping for the dawn of a new civilisation (which they would lead) in the colony.

The conflict between colonists and the 'mother country' provided incentive for the former to support the essentially modern view of the importance of environment as opposed to 'natural' or inherited characteristics in forming character. This 'nature versus nurture' debate, which you will encounter again in other courses, was another product of the Enlightenment period. The Enlightenment intellectuals, disposed to question views of society that saw it as divinely preordained, were also moved to question the idea of individuals being formed purely by heredity (we are as we are because it is part of the 'great plan', or part of nature). They wished to argue, instead, that things can be changed, that individuals can be trained and educated. This view had practical consequences for the Australian colonists: it became prevalent precisely at a time when the colonists could use it to contest the British perspective so opposed to their interests. Once again, we see how the coincidence of the European settlement of Australia occurring at the same time as the great Enlightenment debates in Europe affected the images of 'Australia'. (You may remember from p.24 that the emergence of the Enlightenment term 'nation' and the settlement of Australia was another significant coincidence.)

The major change in the dominant image of 'Australia', however, arose not from the contest between Britain and the colonists, but because of economic developments which

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dictated new attitudes on the part of British interests. And, again, these changes were brought about mainly to serve the purposes of those British interests.

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Read White, chapter 3, 'A workingman's paradise?', pp.29-46 and complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 6

1. Identify at least two responses to the changed British economic order that encouraged a revised image of 'Australia'.

2. When, why, and by whom, was Australia named?

3. What evidence does White discuss concerning whether Australia offered 'a better way of life' to immigrants than if they had remained in Britain? (See pp.40-46, especially pp.45-46.)

Despite the quite startling change of image dictated by different economic needs, contemporary evidence cited by White reveals that, in Britain at least, emigrants continued to be seen as failures, and Australia remained a haven for the second rate. It was paradoxical to combine this notion with the strong practical incentive to depict Australia as a land of opportunity, and this indicates that engrained social prejudices were not easily overcome even in these changed circumstances. Within Australia this led to contradictory tendencies in the newly emerging culture: the tendency to argue, on the one hand, that the best of the population (those with courage and initiative) had left Britain because of the challenge of a new life, while, on the other hand that Australia was second rate, a view held by some colonial intellectuals because it 'helped justify their disdain for those they considered their social or cultural inferiors' (White, p.40). We will meet this paradox again when we take up the 'cultural cringe' debate.

4.2 'Local' images and boundary distinctions

Although the period 1788-1850 (covered in the first three chapters of White's book) saw remarkable changes in the life of the colony, and in images of 'Australia', it is clear that most of those changes were generated by events within Britain. There were increasing incentives for the colonists to challenge dominant British views of Australia in the interests of their self-respect, and these sowed the seeds

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of developments which would become increasingly significant as the colony and its native-born population grew. But during this period these things were relatively uninfluential in comparison with the changes arising out of the economic demands of the 'mother country': Australia became a gaol, a 'hell upon earth', to serve the British penal system; Australia became a sheeprun and a land of opportunity, a workingman's paradise, because Britain needed wool and the wool industry had to attract immigrant labour, and so on. Around 1850, however, starting with the huge influx of population attracted by the gold rushes, Australia began to become more complex, more urbanised, and, with the gold rushes as precedent, events within Australia began to dominate the image-making. Before leaving this early period, however, let us look at an account which speculates at greater length about the nature of the colonial view of the world.

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Read Manning Clark, 'The quest for an Australian identity' (part 1) (excerpt), reading 9.

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Clark emphasises that the 'antipodean inversion' (noted by White, p.9) of a land that seemed at odds with the purposes of 'civilised' man, flora and fauna that reversed established expectations, and so on, had an identifiable impact on the European sensibilities of the pioneers. Indeed, the pioneers were incapacitated by the 'cultural baggage' of European ideas, and their attempts to cope with this led to conflicting modes of 'being Australian'.

SAQ 7

1. Name two features of colonial experience that, in Clark's view, gave the pioneers a sense of human impotence.

2. What are the sources of the 'typical' colonial sense of inferiority?

3. Clark argues that the colonists tried to deal with the sense of inferiority by reacting in two characteristic ways. What were they?

What Clark usefully adds to the debate here is the lesson that people developed different ways of coming to terms with the colonial experience, which even at this stage led to conflicting life styles and conflicting ideas of what it meant to be Australian. Being poorly equipped to develop the land because European methods were not appropriate to

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this environment and judging the results and themselves in European terms, the colonists experienced failure and frustration, inferiority and resentment. Colonists reacted either by rejecting European ideas and standards to reassure themselves that they were a unique breed, or by claiming to be no different from the British mainstream. Neither way was realistic: colonists could not entirely shed their 'cultural baggage' any more than they could pretend that colonial life was part of the British mainstream. Either way showed the importance of images to boundary distinctions: the group wishing to distinguish themselves as a unique new breed (to mark the difference between us and them) had only the crudest indicators to go by, and generated a vulgar image; the group wishing to deny distinctions became sycophantically Anglophile; they had to play out a charade of living by standards and values that had little bearing on their situation. The division between those who made unrealistic claims about a unique Australia and the toadies of the British who wanted reassurance that their Australia was part of the mother country was not to be easily resolved. Indeed, the dilemma of how, or whether, to accommodate the 'British' with the 'Australian', which underlies such different (and unsuccessful) solutions here, remains a continuing element in the discussion of Australian culture, as we will see below.

4.3 Colonial images as precursors of nationalism

We might usefully review this part of our discussion by considering the following question.

Discussion question: Are events of the period 1788-1850 usefully understood in terms of 'nationalism' or a 'national identity'?

Commentary: You will have noticed that there is not much use made of the concepts of nationalism and national identity in the discussion of the period. How, then, does it relate to our earlier concerns? On the one hand, a review of Williams's definition will remind you that the concept of nationalism, despite earlier origins, did not come into general usage until the mid-nineteenth century. It was not likely to be available to colonists before 1850 as a tool for helping them to define their distinctiveness. On the other hand, you will be aware that during this period, the colonial settlements were scattered and separately administered, and there was little motive for the people of the colonies to look for 'persuasively unitary' terms of definition. Indeed, far from seeing themselves in any sense as 'a whole people', the populations of the separate colonies often saw themselves in competition with each other. In any case, there was another form of competition among colonial groups which we might call 'Australianist' and 'Anglophile', in the light of Clark's discussion.

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Nonetheless, there were common experiences and common pressures on the colonial people which, from our reading, we can analyse in terms of what we have seen to be the ascribed properties of nationalism and national identity. The disparity between views of Australia imposed by Britain and the perspective developed by the colonists was increasingly an incentive for the latter to take over the process of image-making (invention) in order to fashion an 'Australia' more suited to their purposes. The disparity of view also caused the colonists to recognise what they had in common and to articulate it through such images. If we follow Clark's account, there developed an exaggerated assertion of the virtues of the colonial character, or a defensively strident Anglophobia. More sophisticated means for coming to terms with the conflicting influences of cultural inheritance and the demands of a new country were to come to hand with the arrival of the concepts of 'nation' and 'national identity' - this was the cutting edge of the debate in the last half of the nineteenth century, especially in the 1890s. But this should not obscure the fact that the process of striving for boundary distinctions stretched back much further, to the first time the colonists attempted to define themselves and their experience by offering a different perspective on 'Australia' from the one dominant in Britain. This struggle and the paradoxes it spawned provided the initial motifs for an Australian culture.

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5 THE PURSUIT OF AN AUSTRALIAN NATION

5.1 Images and nationalism: the 'national type'

The period 1850-1900, when the discussion of an Australian nation and the issue of nationality came to the fore, is covered in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of White's *Inventing Australia*. The concern for distinctiveness (chapter 4), the search for 'identity' (chapter 5), and the part of the intelligentsia in inventing 'the nation' (chapter 6) can only be understood in terms of more widespread patterns of reinterpretation of Western cultural life at that time, or so White argues. An instance of this is apparent in chapter 4, where the agonising over the formation of democratic institutions in Australia is represented as subsidiary to the wider Western debate over democracy (see pp.53-56). Chapter 4, however, primarily concerns itself with how the categorisation of Australia as a 'new society' (along with other Anglo-Saxon colonies) was yet another way of defining 'Australia' by reference to matters extrinsic to the country. It could only be looked at, to use one of White's metaphors, as somewhere on a spectrum between Britain and America: assessed, in other words, by reference to them, rather than in its own terms.

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Read White, chapter 4, 'Another America', pp.47-62, and complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 8

1. What were the 'new societies'? What was the archetypal 'new society'?

2. Did calling Australia a 'new society' serve to generate national feeling? Give reasons for your response.

3. Was identification as a 'new society' a hindrance to the development of 'high culture' in Australia? Give reasons for your response.

An aspect of this chapter which is relevant to our previous discussions about the concern of image-makers with how to arrive at what is distinctively Australian is White's analysis of the tack taken by intellectuals and artists. Unable yet to counter European currents, they took refuge in realism - the attention to the intimate details of ordinary life. Since self-reference (i.e., reference to the

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distinctively 'Australian') could not take the form of reference to an Australian cultural or artistic tradition, they could only think about their condition in terms of the practices of everyday life. This led to the colonial commitment to ordinary life as the true subject of art and literature. In a way, this serves as a sophisticated corollary of the distinction Clark made between what we termed 'Australianists' and 'Anglophiles': in art the exclusion of European modes left only 'the everyday'. But this was no way to counter the charges of materialism, anti-intellectualism, and mediocrity levelled at the new societies, and hence intellectuals were prone to accept the charges as true (again, this is taken up in the 'cultural cringe' debate below).

Yet it was not a matter of truth or falsehood, but of once more being influenced by fashions of thought prevailing in the dominant culture. White alerts us to the fact that attacks on the materialism and philistinism of modern society were the stock-in-trade of the European intellectual at that time. However, in Europe, such characteristics were seen as the effect of industrialism. In Australia a lack of 'dark, satanic mills' made this unsustainable, and so Australian intellectuals attributed the very same condition (materialism, anti-intellectualism etc.) to the newness of the society - seeing it as a peculiarity of colonial culture. Another reaction among intellectuals was for them to become the evangelists of Culture, making every effort to acquire the visible (and material!) trappings of culture for the new society (universities, art galleries, museums, libraries, colonial educational systems). This reaction had a substantial effect on Australian life, as White shows. Nonetheless, the entire effort could be seen as simply following in the footsteps of the archetypal new society, the United States.

For those who were concerned about their distinctiveness as Australians, it may have seemed more promising to concentrate upon the intimate details of ordinary life (which, we saw, was in the foreground of artistic attention) and to draw out from those details the notion that such ordinary life was leading to the development of a unique national type. But you will be well aware now that the very terminology of this exercise was the product of particular intellectual and historical circumstances in Europe. Keep these things in mind as you read chapter 5 in White.

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Read White, chapter 5, 'The national type', pp.63-84, and complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 9

1. In what characteristic preoccupations of the nineteenth century did the 'Australian type' find its origins?

2. Indicate three social functions served by the notion of a 'national type'.

3. What were argued to be the characteristics of the 'Australian type'? Where were these characteristics derived from?

You will have seen that self-conscious local patriotism came to the fore from the 1870s on, and that this was favourable soil for the concept of a 'national type' to take root in. Still, the values of the 'national type' were not those derived from the experience of ordinary life, but from generational conflict (between native-born Australians and their British-born parents), and, more tellingly, from the imaginative rendition of the 'frontier' experience in popular literature. Notice, however, that the 'national type' provided a way of reinterpreting the past. Both the convict stain and the taint of the second-rate emigrant were superseded - their vices had supposedly been lost in the transplantation to the colony, where the new type was claimed to have emerged. With the 'national type', then, a new 'Australia' was born. But one corollary of this was an obsession with proving and testing the new type. This led not only to preoccupation with sporting contests (and elevation of colonial sporting heroes as vindicators of the type), but also to a foolhardy readiness to sacrifice young Australians in overseas wars, which were expected to try their mettle.

Although White locates the origins of this concern for the national type in a precise historical context, it is clear that the preoccupation with the characteristics of the 'real' Australian still remains at the heart of the debate about 'Australia'. You will recall, for instance, that newspaper editorialists frequently referred to the supposed traits of Australians - e.g. proud but laconic, reluctant to make a public show - in commenting upon our failure to celebrate Australia Day (see section 2). The lengthiest accounts of the 'Australian character' in fact were written in the 1950s - Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend* (1958), which you will encounter again in courses HP02a *The Bush Legend* and HP02b *Urban Australia*, is the best example. A shorter account from that time, however, contains the germs of the argument - including a foreshadowing of the work Ward was to produce - and we will look at this as a contrast to, and a means of extending, White's argument about national type.

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Read Raymond Crawford: 'The Australian national character: myth and reality' (excerpts), reading 10.

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SAQ 10

1. Why was Australia 'equalitarian' in Crawford's view?

2. Why did the bush ethos enter the Australian consciousness as a national legend?

3. In what ways do White and Crawford differ over (i) the basis, and (ii) the value, of the national character?

A distinction between White and Crawford that may have occurred to you is that White is detached from the images he discusses, while Crawford is directly involved in propagating an image: at one level he is an image-maker. In other words, while White looks at each image as an artifice, believes none of them, and asks of each who constructed it, in what circumstances, and why, Crawford is concerned to argue for the value of a certain interpretation of national character: he is part of a movement to generate (or in this case to regenerate) a particular image. Crawford sees positive virtues in the national type. Though he accepts that it is a myth, it nonetheless provides a self-picture which enables Australians to act with confidence. It is, perhaps, an idealised notion, but insofar as it encapsulates positive values, it gives Australians something to live up to (as it were), and, as Crawford seems to suggest, reconciles social relations with social justice. Indeed, the drift of the rest of Crawford's article (not included in the excerpt) is that Australia suffered in the 1950s from the loss of the sense of national character: people were left feeling uneasy and, in some cases, deeply disturbed. We have discussed before (section 3.4 above, p.30) the way in which commentators tend to agree on the social functions of nationalism (unifying, and facilitating the smooth organisation of, political groupings) but disagree on whether the various effects of this are good or bad. In a like sense, Crawford shares White's social-functionalist view of the national type, but sees the myth not in White's iconoclastic way but in terms of positive purposes. Crawford's identification of the origins of the values that contributed to the national type in the bush ethos (a product of the most distinctively Australian experience) is precisely the view that White sets out to dispute in the chapter you have just looked at. Having now read Crawford, do you think White succeeds?

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5.2 Identifying the image-makers and their purposes

A point of similarity between White and Crawford is the attention they pay to the part played by writers and artists in creating national images. Crawford, in arguing that the only way local artists could break the tyranny of old-world motifs was to seek for distinctively Australian sources of inspiration, suggests that the only place they could find them was in the bush. The writers, themselves urban radicals, were rejecting the cities because of the cities' 'apish imitation' presumably of British models (though perhaps it could be argued that city life was becoming increasingly more uniform everywhere). White, you will recall, foreshadowed in his Introduction the key part played by the intelligentsia in 'inventing' a national identity, and he gives the most sustained argument for this in his next chapter. It proves an instructive elaboration of Crawford's suggestion from the 1950s.

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Read White, chapter 6, 'Bohemians and the bush', pp.85-109, and complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 11

1. What was the decisive transition in intellectual life in the late nineteenth century? (See particularly p.88.)

2. What were two things that the late nineteenth-century colonial intelligentsia rebelled against, and how was this rebellion translated into a new image of Australia? (The gist of the argument can be found on pp.87,91-100.)

3. How did the economic demands associated with an intellectual career contribute to the shaping of the Australian identity? (Note pp.106-9.)

Having always played a significant part in the propagation of images of Australia and national identity, the intelligentsia - writers, artists, journalists, historians, critics - in the late nineteenth century took over the leading role as image-makers. This was a matter of social context: the community had developed to the state where there was a market for what they produced, albeit a marginal one. The brokers of ideas and images became professional. Their new status, however, generated new intentions, among them being attempts to create the artefacts of a national culture (as saleable commodities), a renewed concern with

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distinctiveness (they represented themselves as purveyors of the authentic 'Australian' article), protection of the local product (entailing the now-familiar efforts to exclude European influences), and - connected with all of these - self-promotion.

In this period of the nineteenth century, the rejection of the cultural establishment and a professional concern with art and intellectual pursuits were commonplace: White's argument that in Australia the intelligentsia found a local reference point for this and a means of expressing the revolt by projecting their values on to 'the bush' is the real point suggested by Crawford. That the bush also represented an imaginative refuge from the constraints and the anonymity of the city also made it a powerful symbol. It was nonetheless a city-dweller's vision of the bush, containing the values of urban bohemia.

Another writer, Graeme Davison, has shown how much the dissatisfaction of urban intellectuals affected the way they portrayed the city and the bush. These intellectuals were economically depressed and hence lived in poorer areas of the city. They tended to treat the city as a symbol of misery, while idealising the bush as the place of happiness, freedom, and genuine Australian values. Yet Davison shows how their treatment of city and country as antithetical symbols relied on heavy borrowing of British literary fashions. A brief excerpt is sufficient to capture the part of the argument most useful for our purposes here.

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Read Graeme Davison, 'Sydney and the bush: an urban context for the Australian legend' (excerpt), reading 11.

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SAQ 12

1. What were the three styles of urban writing originating in London which can be traced in writers of the '*Bulletin* school'?

2. Why did the third of these styles become pre-eminent?

This excerpt suggests that the images generated by the intelligentsia owed as much to their preoccupations and to what they were reading and emulating as to reflections on the country or its people. This pointedly reinforces White's argument that images must be understood as much in terms of literary and aesthetic fashions (and the history of ideas) as in terms of what they supposedly represent.

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5.3 Nationalism and the break with the past

We reach the end of the nineteenth century, aware of a complex interplay of factors affecting images of Australia. The creation of national cultures was a widespread phenomenon in the nineteenth century. The attempts of Australians at this exercise always entailed ticklish issues of what part of the British heritage to retain, and how to incorporate (or even to identify) what was distinctively Australian. Increasing patriotism (signalled by the emergence of bodies like the Australian Natives Association) played a part from the 1870s on. But there are strong arguments that widespread Western trends were more decisive in shaping images than anything unique to the Australian experience. Some such trends were the revolt against the cultural establishment by the newly professional intelligentsia, and the romantic counter-reaction to the spread of urbanisation which led urban radicals to seek imaginative refuge in images of 'the bush' (or any frontier). Yet against the suggested importance of general Western trends we can set Crawford's argument that the 'national character' of the time had a coherence that did draw strength from the bush legend - and which has been lacking more recently. And it has been an argument of Charles Blackton that Australian nationalism, rather than simply being a reproduction of overseas forms, developed indigenous and autonomous forms in relative isolation. If this was so, the rise of Australian nationalism would represent a distinct break with the past.

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Read Charles Blackton, 'Australian nationality and nationalism, 1850-1900', reading 12.

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SAQ 13

1. What were three mainstreams of colonial opinion in Blackton's view?

2. Give examples with details of some issues on which the differences between these groups became apparent. What different ideals or visions of Australia were involved in the different positions taken up on such issues?

3. Why did the nationalist banner pass from the hands of the radicals to the moderates in the 1890s?

Blackton's article might be read as a cautious reworking of emphases around themes very like those we have been

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following. We have here another account of the generation of competing images of 'Australia', this time by three distinct opinion groups within the colony. Again, the differences are analysed in terms of the different social and economic circumstances of those represented by the groups, and, as a result, their different purposes.

Blackton sides with Crawford in seeing the achievement of national identity as something positive, and opposes White by arguing that 'Australia's national integration owed less to the external stimuli of nationalism than to its native drives towards the achievement of distinctive corporate personality' (R12:13). Blackton pays little attention to possible outside influences, concentrating instead wholly on the evidence of events and views within the colonies. As White so insistently emphasises the reliance of local conservatives and radicals on 'imported' ideas and traditions, it is useful to have Blackton's contrasting account to point to the internal historical conditions that facilitated the emergence of distinctively Australian loyalties. Another way of marking the distinction is to say that White works in the general context of ideas abroad in the larger culture, while Blackton works within the specific context of Australian political development. Blackton's detailed review of colonial politics is valuable as a counter to White's 'more global' argument. It is important, too, to understand the circumstances which led to (a) the fragmentation of opinion on socio-economic lines, (b) the different constructions of 'Australia' implied by the divergent groups which emerged (Anglo-Australian loyalists, moderate middle-class proto-nationalists, radical nationalists), and, in particular, (c) the events which left the moderates dominant at the decisive stage of federation: the ratification of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Blackton represents federation as a basis for autonomy on which Australia can build. It is the necessary break with the past, the propitious outcome of nationalist strivings. You might fruitfully compare the last page of Blackton's article where such assertions are made with White's representation of federation (p.111) as a shabby compromise, simply readjusting colonial relations.

In terms of the general debate over the nature of nationalism, Blackton stands beside Smith in seeing nationalism as functional in a positive sense - the positive commentary of Blackton's final page is the antithesis of Orwell's horror of nationalism. The emphasis on nationalism in Blackton's article as essentially the province of Australianist radicals and the working classes against the ruling oligarchy of the nineteenth century should prompt us to read White more closely: to what extent does he convince you that nationalism (or the invention of 'the nation') does serve the ruling interest? Or is it that the landed oligarchy was being superseded as the ruling interest in the late nineteenth century by the moderate middle class

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(White's urban bourgeoisie), who, on Blackton's account, gained control of the banner of nationalism in the 1890s? These are issues to which we will return.

Discussion question: Is there something about the Australian case that makes the concepts of nationhood and the 'Australian identity' important issues?

Commentary: In a general sense, the rise of the concept of nationalism in Europe meant that the 'national culture' was a ruling concern in many Western countries at this time. Nonetheless, much of our reading suggests that there was a special edge to this preoccupation in Australia (as in all 'new societies'). We can find one lead in a remark by Ken Inglis:

> National days [the symbols of nationhood, intended to evoke nationalism] are a preoccupation of new states and new regimes ... Ask an Englishman what his national day is, and he can afford to smile. Having so many generations of national existence uninterrupted by revolution, England has a calendar only faintly marked by history. (Inglis, 1967, p.22)

It seems that continuity gives a confidence that allows nationhood to be taken for granted. But the disruption, above all the fresh start, involved in establishing a new colony creates problems. For a time, colonists may continue to stress their heritage, to assert that they are (in the Australian case) simply transplanted Britons, sharing the (continuous) British heritage. But the experience of living in the new land will be different, not only physically (recall Clark's striking descriptions!) but also at the social level. The whole social structure of 'the mother country' will not have been imported - there will be, for instance, no aristocratic elite, no hereditary ruling class. Inevitably, the nature of social relations will be different. Cultural products - as artists and writers wrestle with such questions as whether to emulate the metropolitan mainstream and how to represent their new environment - will change. Eventually the native-born, whose images of 'the mother country' are second-hand and perhaps distorted, will outnumber immigrant generations. Such differences will make the assertion of continuity increasingly problematic. When combined with a recognition that 'the mother country' itself regards the colonials as secondary (if not second-rate), this will provide an incentive to discover something more appropriate to the experience of life in the new society, and something which will reaffirm for colonials their distinctive worth.

In terms of the political debate of the nineteenth century - or at least the way that debate has been represented in our reading - terms that came to hand for articulating and then resolving these problems were those of 'identity' and 'the nation'. If we are not British, who are

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we? Well, we are Australians. But what does it mean to be Australian? How does being Australian resolve the problem of blending elements of the British heritage with elements originating in the local community? As we have seen, different groups advocated mixing these elements in different proportions, and accordingly arrived at different images of 'Australia'. But the debate, taking up more universal issues of the time, took place around the concept of the nation - and of nationalism and the national type.

To return to the original question, and Inglis's lead, people in 'the mother country' (which is often called the metropolitan culture, the core, or the centre, in such analysis), because of the framework of continuous tradition, will never have to confront the questions that colonial peoples (those in the periphery as opposed to the core) must ask themselves. It is this feature of the Australian case that makes the issues of nationhood and Australian identity especially important, and gives a special pressure to the search for images which will make boundary distinctions clear.

5.4 Poets and images of the nation

As we approach 1901 and with it the political unity brought by federation, let us see how a certain group dealt with the image of 'Australia' in a different way from the one we have been primarily concerned with. The poets of the period had something to say about the aspirations and the political events of the time, and, as you will see, they were by no means in agreement over 'Australia' - indeed some, like O'Dowd and Hope, seem themselves ambivalent. Though poetry represents rather a change of pace for us, it will be worth while jotting down whatever impressions strike you as you read. You will be dealing with poetry again in Course HP02a, *The Bush Legend*.

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Read Bernard O'Dowd, 'Australia' (1900) and William Gay, 'Australian Federation' (1901) in Leon Cantrell, *The 1890s* (p.86 and p.122 respectively).

Read Henry Lawson, 'I hear that our country's a nation at last' (1901); Bernard O'Dowd, 'Where is Australia, singer do you know?' (1912); and A.D. Hope, 'Australia' (1939), reading 13.

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The antitheses that abound in O'Dowd's earlier poem, 'Australia', reflect doubt over what the country is or can be: is it a place for the West to pause and rebuild, repeating old mistakes? a place of refuge (Delos) or birthplace of Apollo (the Sun God), i.e., of new and auspicious beginnings? a promise of Light (understanding) or

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an illusion? simply a new avenue for capitalist exploitation or a return to Eden? These questions rehearse elements of the radical nationalist debate, and indeed divisions over future directions.

In contrast, William Gay in 'Australian Federation' pushes the official celebratory ideology, concentrating on the 'persuasive unitary' sense of nationalism, celebrating as well 'the crimson thread of kinship' ('one dear blood'), and the shared interests ('one-storied enterprise'), while urging us to forget past differences and base material motives. He is undoubtedly the poet of the moderate middle classes.

Henry Lawson ('I hear that our country's a nation at last') portrays the assertive colonial: one who makes a virtue of brashness and refuses to lower his voice or be stared down by Londoners; who plays up the pettiness and narrowness of the metropolis ('there's not room to coo-ee'); who elevates the centrality of the bush legend (Cornstalk and his Bush-mates achieved federation!); and who affirms the decency of 'the national type' ('men at the wheel who are steering it straight') with a final laconic assertion of humour. This is the bush legend - touching most of the elements of the myth - and appealing to readers to affirm the myth. (Lawson was, of course, one of the urban intelligentsia.)

O'Dowd, in his second poem in the reading, 'Where is Australia, singer do you know?', extends his metaphorical questioning. The city, he suggests, is the contemporary reality, but it is also the symbol of corruption. Australia, it seems, has another reality, as a prophecy to be fulfilled, a potential to be achieved. All of his later images underline the sense of 'Australia' as an idea, an image in the eye of dreamers and philosophers which might yet be achieved, with the message that 'Australia' will be whatever we make of her ('she shall be as we, the Potter, mould').

A.D. Hope's 'Australia' (1939), though written much later in the century than the others, nonetheless retains recognisable aspects of the ambivalence over what it means to be Australian that we encountered in the nineteenth century. The reaction against the land incorporated in his images, the lack of culture or history, the (familiar) corrupt cities, the contempt for the stupidity of the materialists, all were the stock-in-trade of alienated Britons. Yet the 'second-hand Europeans' are also scorned, and 'the chatter of cultured apes/Which is called civilization over there'. The poet instead places hope in the possibility of something unique and new emerging 'if still from deserts the prophets come'. Like O'Dowd, Hope sees that the idea and the potential are important. He aptly illustrates the conflicting elements of much of the discussion of Australian culture in this personal tirade.

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SAQ 14

Note whatever consistencies strike you between the attitudes of these poets, and some of the positions we have noted in the debates on 'Australia' and nationalism.

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TUTORIAL TWO

In this tutorial, we shall be working on ways of comparing different views of Australian 'national identity' and 'national characater'.

We shall also do some exercises on reading and comprehending different forms of written materials (e.g. historical and literary).

Any general difficulties with the White book can also be dealt with.

Remember that you should not hold up your work on succeeding sections until a tutorial is held. Keep going!!

6 THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: IN DEFENCE OF 'AUSTRALIA'

As we follow the deb te into the twentieth century, the main argument of White's book becomes that the nation was increasingly preoccupied with the defence of 'Australia', with relatively little thought given to what it was that was being defended. In times of crisis, too, the appeal continued to be to Britain. One foreign observer, the writer D.H. Lawrence, sensing some of this, asked an awkward question which sets the theme for this section:

> Was all that stood between Australia and anarchy just a name? The name of England, Britain, Empire, Viceroy or Governor General or Governor? The shadow of the old sceptre, the mere sounding of a name? Was it just the hollow word 'Authority' sounding across seven thousand miles of sea, that kept Australia from Anarchy? Australia - Authority - Anarchy: a multiplication of the Alpha. (Lawrence, 1950, p.28. Originally published 1923)

6.1 Images and the nation: protecting a corporate personality?

White deals in chapters 7 and 8 with the search for images that would symbolise Australia and evoke patriotism. The first of these were highly abstract and idealised, but through the experience of war an image was arrived at that had roots in significant events and could also carry symbolic connotation. You will notice, however, that images in the period soon after Federation characterise Australia in a very different way from the earlier preoccupation with national type and its offshoot, the bushman. The national type, or the rugged bushman, were ideals for character, or indications of a potential to be aimed for. The new images instead sought to personify not an ideal type, but the people (as a whole) or the country or the nation. Attention, at this time, was not directed towards character, but towards the newly achieved political entity - represented as a whole, and not to be looked into, or questioned. Significantly, too, this political entity was represented as an object under threat.

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Read White, chapter 7, 'Young, white, happy and wholesome' pp.110-124, and then complete SAQ 15.

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SAQ 15

1. What were the limits of the formal powers of the new Commonwealth?

2. What were two impulses that generated appeals to overt patriotism?

3. Apart from the emphasis on such abstract qualities as enterprise, wholesomeness, purity, etc., what were the two most popular new images of Australia to emerge in this period? What effects were they designed to have, and whose interests did they serve?

The most significant feature of the new nation appears to be the ambiguity of its position on the world stage. The formally defined relationship with Britain (and Britain's retention of significant powers) suggests continuing dependence rather than autonomy - White emphasises that the new status existed only in the context of a continuing relationship with Britain. (Look again at D.H. Lawrence's question in relation to this point.) The description of the process as a readjustment of colonial relationships seems more to the point. Nonetheless, the achievement of a political nationhood was the incentive for the search for new images - not of an idealised Australian, but of the country or the corporate personality of the people (see Blackton, reading 12.) The above exercise will have made clear the ways in which alternative images - Australia as 'Minerva' or as 'the little boy from Manly' - could be manipulated to serve economic interests. Note that these images had common properties. First they emphasise our common destiny (unity) at the expense of allowing a recognition of diverse interests within the nation. Doubt and dissent were discouraged: patriotism, they implied, was not questioning. Second, they suggested that for all its wondrous potential, nationhood was fragile and vulnerable - always under threat from the larger world and capable of being fragmented by divisions within. Nationhood was increasingly defined in terms of what it was being defended against rather than what it stood for. Of course, the first major war of the twentieth century seemed to provide realistic grounds for these fears, but it is significant that the experience of war provided a new image for Australia, an image that resurrected the national type - and one that proved an even more monolithic barrier to national self-consciousness.

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Read White, chapter 8, 'Diggers and heroes', pp.125-139, and then complete SAQ 16.

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SAQ 16

1. How did the qualities of 'the digger' compare with the previous approximations of the national type?

2. Was 'the digger' discovered at Gallipoli?

3. Identify some of the ways in which the legend of 'the digger' was used. (There are at least four.)

4. Did a new 'type' emerge between the wars as representing the hope for the future? (See especially pp.134-35.)

Perhaps we can account for the interplay during this period between a generalised image (such as 'the little boy from Manly') which represents the qualities of 'the people', and this resurrected image of the ideal type ('the digger'), by noting that they served different purposes. The first was intended to celebrate and defend the corporate personality, to mobilise shared sentiments, to unify - it referred to what Williams (reading 6) called 'the whole people'. However, it is never the whole people who fight a war, but one sector of the populace - the young fit men. There is thus an incentive to turn to more particular images, celebrating individuals produced from within the nation, who go out to defend it, and whose sacrifice affirms its value.

White shows here how 'the digger' was in effect a continuation of the bush legend. C.E.W. Bean, who before the war had been a journalist and champion of the bush virtues, ascribed precisely those virtues to the Australian soldier in his famous, official war history. The characteristics seen as essential in 'the digger', therefore, were not derived from observing him in action, but ascribed to him because the ready-made myth demanded that they should be! National pride was tested in battle, and prior expectations were confirmed. These qualities, however, were in fact the conventional ideal qualities of the day, given a focus by Gallipoli, but Australians insisted on seeing them as distinctive of their national type.

The important feature of the digger legend, however, was how it was used as another tool for elevating a false 'Australia', that is, one in which there was a shared ideal,

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and a prevailing consensus. In fact, there was no consensus even about the commitment to the First World War. By the time the soldiers returned, there had been protracted and bitter struggles about conscription, prolonged general strikes, a major rift in what had been the governing party, and general war weariness: the country was bitterly divided. Each side in the struggle claimed to represent the real Australia. One side saw anti-conscriptionists and strikers as traitors to the heroes at the front, the other saw the government and conscriptionists as sacrificing Australian lives in a foreign war and betraying the country to imperialists and warmongers: both sides claimed to represent the 'real' ideals of the country. As you saw, the digger legend was employed to deny the rift, to push forward a particular version of what was patriotic, and to bolster up a particular version of Australia - equated with wholesomeness, national productivity, and (again) consensus. The Anzac celebration became a national reference point - here we were impelled to recognise certain common qualities. Those who disagreed were clearly selfish, disloyal, traitorous. Defensiveness still remained pre-eminent, with the corollary that we could not tolerate treachery (dissent) within.

A widespread tactic in the post-war decade was for the community to cope with strain and division by interpreting all threats as coming from outside the country. Thus, local dissidents were explained away by denying that their complaints had any basis in national life, and claiming instead that they were motivated by Russian Bolshevism or Irish Sinn Feinism. This led to a pervasive isolationism and, as White points out, an emphasis on 'sound business principles'. The notion that Australia was self-contained and could handle problems internally by regarding the country as big business was shattered by the depression of the 1930s - originating as it did in economic conditions uncontrolled by and outside Australia, and throwing into question established business practices. Out of this emerged a dissident intelligentsia, demanding a more sophisticated and mature culture (discussed in more detail in section 6.2.1) - but this too could be seen as serving new economic realities.

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Read White, chapter 9, 'Growing up', pp.140-157, and then complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 17

1. What was the dominant image of Australia in the 1920s?

2. What generated the more sophisticated image of the late 1930s? (You should be able to detect three influences.)

3. Why did the 'Australian type' re-emerge? What finally discredited the notion?

We see here the conflicting, nationalist impulses now familiar to us. On the one hand, the reaction to challenges was to be inward-turning, isolationist, keeping 'alien' influences out. This led to impossibly artificial 'Australianist' cultural movements like the Jindyworobaks. On the other hand, a corollary of the metaphor of youthful innocence, there was the demand to grow up, be mature, stand on our own feet as an independent nation capable of treating others as equal. The first of these impulses, the isolationist reaction, had a darker side: condemnation of 'dago' infiltration, resistance to Americanisation, the formation of secret armies that were preparing to arrest the decline caused by democracy and to protect the national spirit (there was here evidence that would vindicate Orwell's jaundiced view of nationalism). The second of these impulses (stand on your own feet, Australia) seemed to lead to a revitalised culture. But this was conditioned by encouragement from industry and fostered by American influence - it did not derive from an 'essential' Australia.

The final chapter of Richard White's book brings the most recent manifestations of the invention of Australia to our attention.

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Read White, chapter 10, 'Everyman and his Holden', pp.158-171, and then complete the following SAQ.

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SAQ 18

1. Why did the concept of 'the Australian way of life' emerge as important? What purposes did it serve?

2. What was the significance of the suburban ideal?

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The concept of a distinctive way of life - like so much that has been used in the debate over 'Australia' - was a fashion particular to a period in all Western societies. Yet it was central to the debate about Australian society from the late 1940s until the 1960s. Its significance was (again) that of defence - it called upon Australians to defend the nation because of the material benefits which allegedly flowed from the particular form of society thus fostered. It was, as White demonstrates, status quo oriented. It also avoided the ticklish problems of self-appraisal, and of which way to jump on the question of an Australian 'essence', by concentrating attention upon externals: the intellectual quest was subsidiary. This was an 'Australia' understood in concrete terms, in which the intelligentsia was no longer central. As well as being defensive, it was unitary, it assumed (indeed demanded) a consensus about the virtues of the way of life.

The fragmentation of opinion about the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s undermined such notions of consensus and threw into question the assumption that the material benefits of the Australian way of life could be sustained continuously. So there began a search for new images - White talks of 'pluralism' and 'multiculturalism' as ways of coping with diversity, and of a tolerance for criticism interpreted as evidence of cultural vitality, all three being included within the notion of a 'new nationalism'! And the invention continues.

As this section illustrates, the twentieth century provides an object lesson in how images were tailored to circumstances. Looking further back through the course, we now note consistent distinctions between different sorts of images: images of place, images of ideal types/individuals, images symbolising the qualities of 'the people', and finally an image relating to material benefits. To elaborate this, think for instance of how the British described the place, first in a way calculated to deter crime, and then in quite a different way to attract free labourers. The colonists, in contrast, had an interest in establishing their distinctiveness from Britons and their self-respect, and did this through idealised images of individuals meant to represent the qualities of the native-born. However, with nationalism's appeal to 'the whole people' new images concentrated less on ideal individuals and more on the qualities of 'the people' as a collective. Finally, in the period of relative affluence after the Second World War, an appeal was made to the quality of life in consumer terms. As this summary suggests each such image can be understood in terms of the circumstances (context) in which it was generated, and the purposes it was intended to serve. One thing we have not attended to in our review of the twentieth century, however, is - who were the image-makers? Before turning to that, however, complete the following exercise.

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SAQ 19

Give one example of each of the sorts of images referred to in the paragraph above, and note briefly circumstances under which each of your examples was deployed.

6.2 Identifying the image-makers: the intelligentsia as leaders and critics

Representatives of the nationalist intelligentsia, following the start made in the 1890s, continued to assume the role of image-making into the early decades of the twentieth century. We have already noted the importance of one such figure - C.E.W. Bean, journalist and historian - in the evolution of 'the digger' image. There were now to be more determined attempts by this group to provide cultural leadership. But that their influence was dependent upon the turn of events rather than upon their ability to command a following is indicated by the demise of the nationalist intelligentsia as an influence in the 1960s and 1970s.

6.2.1 The intelligentsia as cultural leaders

In the period between the wars, even while 'the digger' image was still being appealed to, changing material and economic conditions (associated with demands for productivity and national efficiency) gave a new eminence to those who could provide leadership in what were essentially technical skills. Technologists (scientists, engineers, etc.) and other experts (intellectuals) were now seen as the hope of the future. And where the previous generation of the intelligentsia were content to be seen as professionals, this generation wanted recognition as leaders. Some of them set out to provide leadership not only in industry, science, and technology, but also in culture. White refers to 'a new generation of writers [who] set out to create an Australian culture'. After 50 years (from the 1870s) and many starts, here was to be another 'creation'! As it happened, however, this move largely came to involve another invocation of 'the legend'.

An exemplary case of this was Vance Palmer, novelist, essayist, and critic, who - with his wife Nettie Palmer - set out to provide just such leadership in the period before the Second World War. Palmer's social commentary appeared in journals and papers in the inter-war years; his seminal work, *The Legend of the Nineties*, was published in 1954. Palmer projected an ideal of Australian civilisation, but, interestingly, sought to ground it in the earlier 'legend'. In fact, Palmer was reacting to the divisions and bitterness of the post-war world: he sought to heal the rift in another

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way, by harking back to a prototype of fellowship that had supposedly thrived in less sophisticated times, uncorrupted by the cities, and untainted by outside influences. His message seemed to be that under those conditions, Australians were fused in a common dream of the future. His was not the argument that we could or should resurrect the nineties (he refers to it as a 'dreamtime'), but rather that reference to the legend could help us transcend the contemporary divisions, to recognise that we are 'a people' and can again share a common dream, build a common culture.

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Read Vance Palmer, 'The legend', reading 14.

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SAQ 20

1. Has Palmer been taken in by the self advertisement of the Bohemian intelligentsia identified in White's chapter 6? (Note particularly the last paragraph of section 1, R14:6.)

2. In the light of other readings (particularly Blackton), how accurate is Palmer's account of the historical basis of 'the legend'?

3. What is the most striking disparity between Palmer's argument and that of Richard White?

One of the significant things about Palmer's 'legend' is that it was written in, and designed to serve, the period of apparent disunity and disillusion bounded by two wars, and including a major depression. He was seeking to formulate a 'common' experience (albeit one in the past) to serve as a point of reference for the present. As the exercises above reveal, however, this led to his rescuing from the 1890s a version of 'Australia' that other writers dealing with that period would contest.

Palmer should be seen as part of a broader intellectual movement whose members - some of whom were by now university academics - did claim to be speaking for an essential Australia, an 'Australia of the spirit'. They were also claiming for 'the national type' a history which was radical and nationalist. But their academic nationalism paralleled the literary nationalism of the 1890s and their 'Australia of the spirit' was a resurrection of the 1890s bush legend. Ironically, too, they would emulate the claim of the 1890s generation to be seeing Australian literature and history for the first time through Australian eyes.

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6.2.2 Divisions in the intelligentsia

Not all intellectuals, however, were as clearly committed to the legend as was Palmer (and later Crawford and Russel Ward). We have already seen A.D. Hope's bitterly ambivalent poem, 'Australia' (1939) (reading 13). A similarly ambivalent piece, but one more directly debating Palmer's thesis, is one of Manning Clark's first publications, 'A letter to Tom Collins' (1943). Tom Collins was the pseudonym of Joseph Furphy, the author of *Such is Life* (1903). This novel had been regarded as one of the representative expressions of the bush spirit, and Furphy had been made a chief reference point of the cultural movement formulated by such as Palmer. (Palmer praised Furphy as a great democrat and spokesman of the radical nationalists of the 1890s. Interestingly, the American intellectual, C. Hartley Grattan, described by White as a central figure in American attempts to foster Australian nationalism, also published enthusiastic articles about Furphy.) From 1941 the Melbourne journal, *Meanjin*, serving for much of this period as a channel for the ideas of the nationalist intelligentsia, featured on a regular basis open letters to the spirit of Tom Collins. Manning Clark's letter appeared in 1943 in a special issue marking the centenary of Furphy's birth - an issue whose contributors included Vance Palmer.

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Read Manning Clark, 'A letter to Tom Collins', reading 15.

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SAQ 21

What is the problem represented by Tom Collins?

Clark suggests in effect that the myth of mateship is not sufficient in the complex and bewildering circumstances of the 1940s. Much about Australia horrifies him - he notes in particular the way the country has been ravaged in a frenzy of exploitation which mateship has clearly done little to improve. There is much to be unhappy about - but 'the unhappy want us to confess our failure, to embrace the old faith' (in other words, renounce 'Australia' and resurrect the 'old faith' of the British heritage). Clark erects once more the dilemma of choice: whether to take up the bush ideal - thin and vulgar as it has become, it may be all we have - or to live as artificial Europeans, which would be an admission of failure (a denial of 'Australia'). He ends in doubt: 'I wonder what we will do.'

A few years later, A.A. Phillips confronted Clark's doubt by making clear suggestions about what we should do in

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an essay designed to debunk those who (in Clark's terms) wished us to embrace 'the bad old faith'. Identifying the pressures of 'metropolitan' standards versus 'Australian' practices no less clearly than Clark, Phillips attempted to deflate the problem through inventing the concept of 'the cultural cringe' - arguing essentially that the reference to external (English) standards was irrelevant to an assessment of the home grown product. This may strike you as a case of provincial special pleading, but it is worth reading Phillips's assertive, but amusing, restatement of the nationalist case, because his concept, 'the cultural cringe', entered the vocabulary of the debate about Australia.

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Read A.A. Phillips, 'The cultural cringe', reading 16.

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SAQ 22

What was 'the cultural cringe'? How did it affect the reaction to Australian art, music and literature?

Clark's lament and Phillips's notion of 'the cultural cringe' do much to crystallise recurring elements in our discussion. Clark's 'Letter to Tom Collins' was once described as the first expression of 'a modern Australian sensibility' - indicating that the persistent dilemma of 'us' and 'them' and the ambiguous attempts at its resolution, had at last been recognised as the chief influence on our cultural life. That Clark hesitates to move either way, thereby highlighting the elements of doubt and ambiguity, is perhaps what makes his case distinctively modern. Phillips, though conscious of the conflict between 'metropolitan' and 'local' cultures (for instance, he wrote another essay on 'the family relationship' between British and Australian literatures), argues that there can be a middle ground. There are, in short, virtues in the Australian product that cannot be understood through the filter of English perceptions, which blinkers the cultural sycophant who practises 'the cringe direct', but that will also be missed by the practitioner of 'the cringe inverted' (the God's own country and I'm-a-better-man-than-you-are Australian bore).

Phillips thus provides strikingly apt descriptions of responses to the Australian dilemma we have noted. But that he did not swing the debate, or persuade Australians to adopt 'a relaxed erectness of carriage', will become evident when we look below at Humphrey McQueen's 'The suckling society', written twenty years later.

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It is useful, however, to understand that McQueen was at the end of another trend - a trend of increasing alienation of the intelligentsia from Australian life.

6.2.3 The alienation of the intelligentsia

A theme that was not discussed in our earlier reading of White's final chapters (9 and 10) was what happened to the intelligentsia in the post-war decades.

Intellectuals like Palmer had centred their debate on a radical 'national character' associated with change. In the post-war period, many of them entered government service and attempted to influence the course of the debate concerning post-war reconstruction. The defeat of the Labor government in 1949 entailed the defeat of these attempts. Thereafter, the emphasis seemed to be on security and continuity rather than change, and the reformist ideals of these nationalist intellectuals were secondary. If matters of the spirit were thought about at all, it was obvious that the cheerful assertiveness of A.A. Phillips was preferable to the agonised self-doubt of Manning Clark. Mostly, they were not thought about. The predominance of the suburban way of life confirmed the alienation of the intellectuals who had no place in it. Not until the fragmentation of opinion around the Vietnam War in the late 1960s did a space for debating ideas and for dissident criticism of society open up and allow intellectuals to become influential again.

After the anti-intellectualism of the 1950s and early 1960s gave way, what did the new generation of the intelligentsia have to say about 'Australia'? An interesting indicator of the times was Humphrey McQueen's *A New Britannia* (1970), which set out to demolish the legend of the radical nationalists by demonstrating that the origins of Australian radicalism and nationalism were not to be found in a mythical bush mateship of egalitarian collectivism. Rather, the people who were the base of the legend of the 1890s, the people who originated the Australian Labor Party, were an acquisitive petite bourgeoisie, motivated by a lust for material possessions, and by racism. They were in fact anti-socialist and reactionary. This view clearly has far-reaching ramifications for all that had been argued to be most distinctively Australian by intellectuals looking to the radical nationalist tradition. A shorter piece, though nonetheless polemical, gives the essence of McQueen's critical view of 'Australia'. As you read it, you will see that it picks up many of the elements we have touched on, and so can serve us as a summary piece.

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Read Humphrey McQueen, 'The suckling society' (excerpts), reading 17.

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SAQ 23

1. With reference to the three terms McQueen introduces (see R17:1), briefly summarise his argument about what is wrong with Australia.

2. What has been the basis of our 'privileged position', and what effects has this had?

3. How did language add to our problems?

McQueen's article is clearly polemical: a strong argument designed to make us conscious of our predicament as a prelude to action. You can take or leave that aspect of his work as you feel inclined, but what is interesting for our purposes is the way he articulates the problems of being derivative, dependent, and closed - problems which implicitly underlie so much that we have read. The move that McQueen makes that is so directly contrary to the strategy adopted by previous generations of radical intellectuals is to argue that Australia is not a society in its own right and can never be understood by looking for a 'genuine essence'. Instead, he argues that our experience has been shaped by economics and by chance. His fundamental point is that Australians enjoyed a 'privileged position' - the country produced the sorts of primary products that were in demand, and we received the economic rewards from this without having done anything to deserve them. Accustomed to such material benefits, the population became socially passive, and acquisitive. Not having had to face the struggle for existence (and those intractable problems that make people reflect on their plight and produce theory) we find ourselves ill-equipped to think about the nature of social problems and society in the more complex circumstances of contemporary life. There has been an absence of consciousness of social divisions (society has been repressively homogeneous) and an absence of consciousness about 'Australia'. If this is the case, then we are clearly in a predicament in the 1970s and 1980s when the social problems stemming from world economic crises can no longer be so easily ignored. McQueen's article was written in the early 1970s. Do you think the situation he describes has changed since then?

Finally, as an extension of McQueen, and also as a link to Clark's doubting 'Letter to Tom Collins', consider what

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Manning Clark has to say about the Australian identity in the 1980s.

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Read Manning Clark, 'The quest for an Australian identity' (part 2) (excerpt), reading 18.

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SAQ 24

1. What are some of the problem areas which Clark claims make it difficult to say what an Australian is? (Give at least four.)

2. On what crucial issue are Clark and McQueen agreed?

Clark, like McQueen, reiterates themes with which we are now familiar, but the interesting coming together of the two - as you will have seen in answering the second question above - is their agreement that the relatively unproblematic provision of the material goods of life in the twentieth century has left Australians ill-equipped to answer the serious questions about 'Australia', or to cope with the problems to come. However, their description of this essential problem varies. For Clark, the experience of suffering is the stimulus for myths which are created to make life intelligible and bearable. The accident of relative prosperity this century has left Australians without the need for myths, but has also cut them off from the traditions of the past (which had been created in suffering, and have no relation to contemporary conditions of life). Corrupted by hedonism and consumerism, Australians now lack the means to make life intelligible and bearable - they have no resources of myth. They are therefore unable to bring understanding to the Australian experience - to say what 'Australia' is. McQueen, starting from more or less the same assertion about the material conditions of life, argues instead that people who have never experienced problems that defied resolution on the material level, have never had to think in theoretical terms. The intractable problems now arising defy obvious practical solutions, and Australians are devoid of the theories that would help them explain the (non-obvious) structural origins and possible solutions to such problems. In effect, Australians lack the means even to think about society and social life on the broad scale.

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6.2.4 Intellectuals and boundary distinctions: a note on analysis and intention

It is clear when reading Clark and McQueen that different stances affect historical interpretation, even when there is agreement on the nature of the facts. Clark seems interested in a deeper understanding of what it has all been about - his is almost a religious view. McQueen is interested instead in making us conscious of our predicament as a means of encouraging us to change it - his is a revolutionary view. What seems evident with both authors is that they do not pretend merely to analyse and describe: they themselves are committed to particular interpretations of 'Australia' - interpretations which entail something further in the way of action and self-definition. Of course, we have noted others of this ilk, such as Palmer, Crawford, and Phillips. Another way of putting this is to say that in such cases we are dealing with writers (members of the intelligentsia) who are directly involved in working at image-making and plumbing boundary distinctions. They are unlike those writers (also members of the intelligentsia) whose purpose is to analyse how others arrive at images and boundary distinctions - Richard White (and perhaps the writer of this study guide?) belong to this latter category. Not all historians or social commentators are obvious in committing themselves to a particular stance, but as our reading has made clear, some such intentions and assumptions always do affect the way a topic is discussed (or the way in which, to use White's metaphor, the object of discussion is 'invented'). This brings us full circle back to the nature of debate, which is the subject of our brief, concluding section 7.

6.3 Review

Discussion question: Why were defences of 'Australia' and the accompanying reluctance to think about what it stood for, so predominant in the twentieth century?

Commentary: White shows how the implied consensus of 'nationhood' was always represented as fragile and threatened by those whose economic interests were best served by the status quo. It was suggested that the benefits of national life were threatened by giving recognition to divisions and dissent. There also seemed to be realistic threats (two World Wars) from the 'evil' world without. So it was strongly argued that it was in our interests for all to pull together in the national defence, rather than to look into what nationhood had achieved, or to ask whose interests it served. The emphasis - to link back to our early discussion - was on 'persuasive unitary' senses of 'the nation', to the extent of imposing a repressive homogeneity (see White, McQueen, Clark).

But those who would dissent from the mainstream - radical intellectual leaders like Palmer or Phillips - also

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were so committed to the idea of 'one people' and an essential, common experience that they did not look deeply enough into, or take seriously enough, the dilemma arising from the uneasy mix of colonial ties and nativist impulses (the British heritage and the Australian experience). They too were committed to a consensus, albeit one which other intellectuals like Clark would question. On this side, too, implied consensus precluded questioning, and so they provided little to counter such mainstream ideas as those identified by White. Even those who did express doubt (like Manning Clark, in 1943) were not very influential - people were not inclined to debate such problems in a society that (materially at least) promised to 'deliver the goods'. In fact, for most of the period in question, it has been argued that people were concerned to protect what they had. In so far as 'the nation' could be sold to its inhabitants as the source of those benefits, it was to be defended rather than looked into.

Only when the promise seemed to fade, with the fragmentation of opinion about an unpopular war and economic crises from the mid 1960s on, was there to be an impulse to question and dissent which would call for new images of 'Australia'. At that time, the intelligentsia began to argue (e.g. McQueen, Clark) that the benefits we had received did not stem from our good work, or our sterling defence of 'the nation': they were largely a matter of luck. (You may know that one of the most widely read explanations of 'Australia' in the 1960s was Donald Horne's book, *The Lucky Country*.)

Throughout the period, however, we have seen that not only did the 'mainstream' images of 'Australia' (those White identifies as serving ruling interests) undergo constant revision - e.g. from wholesome rural innocence, to urban sophistication and the suburban ideal - but alternative images were pursued. Exemplary ideals - Minerva, the little boy from Manly, the digger, the bushman, the lifesaver - waxed and waned, and a 'way of life' was celebrated. Throughout, commentators wrestled with the recurring question of how to combine the metropolitan with the local; and the proportions of each they advocated in the cultural mix dictated different images of 'Australia'. You can see now that such questions lie behind much of the discussion of Australia Day that we considered in the first section.

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TUTORIAL THREE

Writing an essay

- Being clear about the question asked.
- Being clear about the range of activities the question demands.
- Setting down the components of your argument.

We will spend part of this tutorial going through the guidelines to the assessment item for this course. Re-read them before coming.

Then, to introduce a comparative element, we will imagine another sort of essay by looking at two of the readings discussed in the course guide, and setting up a question about them. The readings we will look at are Manning Clark, 'A letter to Tom Collins' (reading 15), and A.A. Phillips, 'The cultural cringe' (reading 16). The question we will ask will be 'Are Clark and Phillips talking about the same "Australia"?' You should run through the discussion of these two pieces (section 6.2.2) and the relevant SAQs (21 and 22) before attending the tutorial. If you have some early thoughts about the question, jot them down too.

Remember:
1. If you do not intend to come to the tutorial, you will still find it useful to carry out the exercises suggested above.
2. If you do intend to come, don't hold up your work waiting for the tutorial. Press on!

7 CONCLUSIONS: ANALYSING THE DEBATE

When we began this course, it was suggested that, in the process of looking at the way 'Australia' has been discussed, we would learn something general about the processes of debate. What has been confirmed is that debates over some important issues - such as 'Australia' - will never be resolved because there are no right, or true, answers to such questions as 'What is the "real" Australia?' This is not to say that there is no point in the debate or that we cannot arrive at useful answers - answers which serve a particular purpose at a particular time. But circumstances will change: the answer appropriate at the moment might not serve in the future. For instance, McQueen's version of 'Australia' might have a use if it motivates people to go out and seek changes. If the changes are achieved, however, his version of 'Australia' will no ionger be persuasive - it will not make our experience intelligible in a way which will persuade us to act. The need for that 'Australia' will have passed: it will have become redundant.

But White argues persuasively that different versions of 'Australia' served certain purposes effectively for a time before being superseded, and that is the point. In effect, all such debates are a process of making something about our life intelligible, but in particular circumstances, serving particular purposes, for particular times.

This points up the importance of the context of the debate. We have seen that historical period, and cultural environment, affect the debate in very important ways. For instance, the fact that the debate over 'Australia' in the late nineteenth century was very much to do with a discussion of 'the national type' depended on two features of the context: first, at just about this time native-born Australians were becoming dominant, and looking for a means of explaining their difference from the British colonisers; and second, the nineteenth-century preoccupation with categorisation gave rise to the concept of 'national type' at the same time, so that it became available as a means for Australians to construct just such an explanation as was needed. In the context of the 1950s, however, 'the national type' was less effective in serving such a purpose: it had been discredited by the 'master race' theories of the Second World War. And so people looked elsewhere, to the notion of a 'way of life', to explain what was important about 'Australia'.

A third thing that has been stressed is that people enter the debate with certain intentions. We have discussed at length how a particular class of people, the intelligentsia, assumed the principal role in articulating definitions and boundary distinctions (and the images that encapsulate them) from the late nineteenth century onwards. Their emergence in this role was also to do with context - social circumstances that facilitated their becoming

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professionals. But once engaged in the process, they pursued clear purposes: career advancement, social change that would enhance their position (the ideal was cultural leadership), patronage of powerful interests, and so on - all of which influenced the images they purveyed.

A subsection of the intelligentsia - the academics and intellectuals - may seem to stand aside to comment on the debate (that is, telling us what is going on, and who are the image-makers, rather than themselves being image-makers). Richard White, for instance, seems to assume this position. However, the distinction becomes hard to maintain when other academics, like R.M. Crawford, both comment on the progress of definition and display a clear intention to endorse or perpetuate a certain image. Intention is as important in shaping academic commentary as it is in influencing the perhaps more obvious image-making of other sections of the intelligentsia (journalists, writers, artists, critics, and so on).

This means that the issues of context and motive (or intention) should also be read into the academic debate. It is clear that Richard White, R.M. Crawford, Charles Blackton, A.A. Phillips, Manning Clark, and Humphrey McQueen provide different histories of the debate about Australia. They cannot avoid speaking out of a specific context; for example, the Clark of 1943 (in 'A letter to Tom Collins') speaks somewhat differently from the Clark of 1981: doubt has been replaced by the certainty that we must emphasise 'the Australian' in our cultural goulash. But it seems no accident that White, writing in a time when economic problems and the theories about them are at the forefront of attention, gives mainly economic reasons as the things that determine different inventions of 'Australia'. Nor is it coincidental that McQueen, writing at a time when we were extricating ourselves from the Vietnam War, wants to emphasise 'wars of national liberation' as important in determining new understandings of 'Australia'. Motives play their part in all this, and indeed most of these historians make no secret of them. Crawford, for instance, thinks Australia has lost its way, and that a new consciousness of national identity would help us regain our footing: that is why he tries to revive the debate. (And compare this with the plaintive comments of John Newcombe, noted in the newspaper excerpts in section 2.) Phillips is a nationalist who expects us to overcome our 'cultural cringe' so that we can respond to the excellence of the local cultural product. McQueen is motivated by the hope that in alerting us to our predicament, he will induce us (or some of us) to do something about it.

These things cannot be avoided. Historians, and social scientists generally, are not omniscient beings, able to stand outside society and see it objectively. They write at a particular time in a particular society - this is their context. They inevitably have views about their society and intend to advance them. And they write about things which

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involve or interest them (presumably, too, they are involved and interested in enhancing their standing as critics and cultural leaders): they have motives. We can help clarify these issues with a final brief reading:

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Read Bill Gammage, 'Truth and tradition in Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea' (excerpt), reading 19.

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SAQ 25

Can you see connections between the historiographical elements mentioned by Gammage at the end of this reading, and some of the arguments raised by White?

In the end, though the subject of the debate changes, and the questions raised are always giving rise to new answers, the nature of the debate is constant. The search for intelligibility continues. The mark of academic enquiry is continuing dialogue.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography is a list of books or other materials which are used in the preparation of intellectual work - a book, a thesis, a study guide, an essay.

This bibliography includes both set texts and works cited in the study guide. The bibliography in this course serves two purposes. Firstly, it will give you the necessary information to find in the Library the texts from which the readings have been taken as well as those to which references have been made in the study guide, should you wish to read further. Secondly, it provides an example of how a bibliography is constructed.

You will note that writers' names are listed alphabetically, and followed by the year of publication, and chapter or article titles. Book titles, and names of journals and newspapers are underlined or typed in italics. You will also note that in the case of books, the place of publication (e.g. Melbourne) and the name of the publisher (e.g. Oxford University Press) is given. When journals are referred to, the volume number, number and date of issue, and page numbers of the article should be given.

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FURTHER READING

These readings are suggested for those who wish to explore some themes and issues further. They are not required for the assessment item.

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ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The practice followed in the answers given below is to provide the essence of an answer very briefly in an opening sentence. You will be able quickly to check your answer against this. Then, in most cases, there are a few sentences or a paragraph expanding the answer, sometimes with indications of where in the reading the answer came from, and pointers towards the broader discussion.

SAQ 1 (p.26)

Murtagh equates 'nation' with the political entity (a distinctive community), and 'nationalism' with a common spirit, or shared identification.

A more elaborate answer might note that:

i) He denies the connection between 'nation' and such things as race, geographical frontiers, blood, or language as artificial (R4:1, para.2). His attention is wholly on what Williams describes as the 'political formation'.

ii) He argues that 'nationality' is a shared state of mind, arising out of a community's sense of being distinct from others, and having shared traditions (R4:1, para.2).

iii) Australia's traditions are seen as to do with ideals of liberal democracy, but he emphasises as a focal point the proclamation of the Commonwealth in 1901 - another way of stressing the modern political formation as constituting 'the nation' (R4:1, para.7 - R4:2, para.3).

iv) 'Nationalism' for Murtagh clearly has to do with patriotic and imaginative identification with the political formation, and above all with a sense of 'the whole people'. There is no allowance here for the 'nationalism' of subordinate ethnic or language groups, like Aborigines.

SAQ 2 (p.28)

1. In the late eighteenth century, in France (at the time of the French Revolution).

2. As 'a belief that all those who shared a common history and culture should be autonomous, united, and distinct in their recognised homelands.' (R8:1)

3. (i) A vision - that mankind is 'naturally' divided into distinct nations.

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(ii) A culture - in particular, a historical culture that binds present and future generations.

(iii) A solidarity - primarily based on territory, a 'homeland'.

(iv) A policy - a nationalist programme of action to sustain the national ideal.

4. In its emphasis on the role of the 'unique event' that is held to shape the 'character' of the nation.

SAQ 3 (p.31)

Your answer should refer to this fundamental distinction: White believes that national identity is an invention serving sectional interests; Smith, that it is the consciousness of a shared identity.

Both White and Smith stress the social functions of 'national identity' in attempts to preserve a particular social equilibrium. The chief distinction between them is that, for White, it is an invention intended to preserve a particular status quo which has the effect of serving sectional interests (the ruling class), whereas for Smith it is a matter of choice among members of a community who have realised that they must assert a mutual bond (identity) to defend their common needs, culture, and territory. Another way of posing the distinction is to say that in White's terms 'national identity' is an artificial imposition which will be constantly contested while for Smith it is a matter of achieving consciousness of a real commonality which must be constantly defended. Such disparate interpretations of 'national identity' will become more evident in other readings as you proceed, and you should be alert for them.

SAQ 4 (p.34)

1. Your answer here could refer to (i) imagination, (ii) commerce, (iii) science, (iv) philosophy (religion).

   The first thing to generate and influence ideas of 'the southland' was simply imagination - speculations that served fantasies of avarice, religion, or science.

   Once some of the initial facts about Australia were discovered by explorers like Dampier, their interpretation was influenced by at least three different forms of orientation:

   (a) The commercial view particular to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this light, Australia appeared barren and profitless - few of the valuable commodities (spices, minerals, commercial crops and

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animals) were readily evident. The climate and country seemed unsuitable for European styles of agricultural development. The natives were seen as barbaric: they did not give evidence of industry, had not developed the land, had no interest in material possessions, and seemed not amenable to religion. (An expressive representation of this sort of world view, and how it sought to remake the 'natural' world, is to be found in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).)

(b) The scientific view, which became dominant in a slightly later period. This gave rise to a contrasting view: Australia as a land rich in novelty. Unique flora and fauna promised to fill gaps in contemporary theories, and to provide tests of hypotheses generated in Europe. Australia, therefore, was a place of excitement, a place to resort to for evidence in scientific disputes.

(c) The philosophical view, especially that concerned with the 'nature' of man. If one held to the sceptical view of the effects of European civilisation, Australia could be represented as an 'unspoilt' Eden; however if one held the stern religious views of the time (in which 'nature' represented the unredeemed state), Australia was seen as a place of depravity and barbarism.

2. The 'noble savage' or the evil barbarian.

A fashionable scepticism about European civilisation led some intellectuals to a romantic idealisation of 'natural man', and the simple 'uncivilised' life, and for these, the Aboriginal was seen as a 'noble savage'. For evangelical Christians, however, for whom man was evil and condemned by sin, the Aboriginal 'natural man' was naturally evil - and could only be 'saved' by strenuous missionary work.

3. They were 'representative' oddities as long as the land seemed foreign, but peripheral as soon as native-born whites of European origin began to regard Australia as 'their' land.

Aborigines were at first just the sort of oddity as a race that seemed appropriate to this novel country. However, White points out, once the idea of 'being Australian' developed among European settlers, their very non-European origins barred them from being part of Australian society. Far from being representative, they were eventually quite dispossessed.

SAQ 5 (p.35)

1. Your answer should refer to Australia being seen as distant, unknown, a place of exile and brutality, and a threat.

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The dominant view of Australia in Britain at the time was that encapsulated by the chapter title, as hell upon earth. It was feared because it was distant and unknown, a place of exile, but more pertinently because the system was indeed brutal. But the image of exaggerated horror was one emphasised by the authorities for practical ends: as a means of keeping the working classes in line. The image of 'Australia' was essential to the British penal system: the moral and economic function of Botany Bay was as a weapon in the control of working-class crime in Britain.

2. The colonists attempted to resist the British view, and emphasised nurture rather than nature in the images they constructed for themselves.

   While the British view of hell upon earth remained dominant, to be Australian was to be 'tainted' with the depravity and brutality of the system. Those in the colony naturally began to resist this view, rejecting first the idea that the convict taint could be inherited in order to be able to instil self-respect in the native-born, and second - as a result of this - placing emphasis upon the effects of environment rather than heredity. They claimed to find the virtues of the age - industry, sobriety, respectability - in the 'new' generation. But their inflated hopes (e.g. Wentworth in White, p.25) revealed the defensive nature of their struggle, and along with it a sense of inferiority which plagued Australia for a long time thereafter (you will be reading A.A. Phillips on Australia's 'cultural cringe' later).

3. On the grounds of the similarities between the alleged qualities of Australian life, and the actual qualities shown to be characteristic of British working-class life.

   Parallels between the ascribed features of Australian life and the findings of enquiries into British working-class life suggest the argument that those middle-class critics of Australian life were ignoring characteristics of English working-class life which were to evoke shocked disbelief when they were revealed by Mayhew, Engels, and parliamentary enquiries. Characteristics seen as distinctively Australian were in fact part of the British social order: they could be projected on to far-away Australia in order to avoid having to recognise them close to home (see White, pp.22-24, especially p.23).

SAQ 6 (p.37)

1. Your answer should refer to (i) British industry's demand for Australian primary products and the need for an image which would attract immigrant labour to the

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colony; and (ii) the community disruption and environmental pollution which encouraged a positive response to a country not yet so disfigured.

The industrial revolution led to significant changes in the British economic order. On the one hand, Britain had to look for the primary products that would fuel the manufacturing industry. On the other, there was the problem of coming to terms with what massive industrialisation was doing to Britain: smoking mills and urban sprawl changing the environment, working-class communities being fragmented and dislocated by the demands of new modes of work with many thrown into unemployment. White identifies two responses here. First, the change in economic needs made Australia a major supplier of primary products - particularly wool, but the change from a 'gaol' to a 'sheeprun' fuelled a large demand for free labour which was not available in the colony - workers would have to come from England. This would also relieve the pressure of working-class unemployment and poverty in Britain. The problem was that the old image of 'exaggerated horror' was not calculated to attract free immigrants - the country instead had to be sold as a land of opportunity. A second response was emotional: upset by what industrialisation had done to the British life and environment, many were prone to see Australia as a utopia, not yet disfigured by industrialisation: 'a haven from industrial capitalism'. Both hard-nosed economic realism and romantic idealism, then, dictated a substantial revision of the image of Australia. It became a land of golden opportunity!

2. In 1814, Matthew Flinders, the explorer, provided the name 'Australia'. He gave his own reason (see p.32), but in the broader term the name stuck because it filled the need for a name more appropriate to the newly revised image. The old names (Botany Bay, etc.) were irredeemably sullied by association with the superseded convict system and its assiduously cultivated images of horror.

3. Ideally you should note (i) that there is evidence of exploitation (of women and children), oppression (of minority racial groups), and poverty; and (ii) that different groups were said to present different interpretations - dominant economic interests, the working class, and established migrants had disparate motives.

To elaborate, the concrete evidence for whether conditions in Australia were better for the workingman than in Britain has to be interpreted through three filters. First, the official propaganda of the dominant economic interests (and, note, later history often reflects these ruling views) had to present Australia as a place of better opportunities, for the reasons noted

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earlier.

Second, working-class movements in the colonies had an interest in protecting their conditions by discouraging mass immigration that would put them in a disadvantageous position when bargaining over the price of labour and so they had reason to contest the image.

Third, those workers who did speak out about how they had bettered themselves often referred to the England they had left - yet even in England conditions had changed. So the increased opportunities that these people saw as distinctive of Australia might arguably have been a general feature of changes in the broader economic order. That said, White points out that in unskilled areas there was exploitation of women, children, and oppressed racial groups (Chinese, Kanakas); there were large areas of both rural and urban poverty; and hence it is reasonable to conclude that the benefits of 'the workingman's paradise' were available only to a minority group of white, skilled, male workers.

SAQ 7 (p.38)

1. You should mention the land's unfamiliarity, and the religious philosophy that stressed man's impotence.

   The first feature related to the vastness and strangeness of the land which was so much at odds with the purposes of 'civilised' man (understood purely in terms of European conditions) that it quite dismayed the first observers. They felt impotent to achieve anything; incapable of subduing the continent. But their experience was also shaped by a second feature, the religious views of the time which indoctrinated them with the sense of God's omnipotence, and their impotence in the face of his designs.

2. It would be useful to note here the apparent uselessness of the land, the isolation, the government by British expatriates rather than the native-born, and the emphatically rural economy.

   Clark suggests that the very uselessnes (inferiority) of the land, and the fact that its European inhabitants had to apologise for it, instilled an initial sense of inferiority. The material backwardness and isolation inevitable in a pioneering community contributed further to the feeling of being second-rate. Impotence in the face of the intractable land led to doubts about their power to effect change. At the social level, the absence of careers open to native talent (all the top positions being held by British administrators) seemed to imply a lack of ability in the native-born. Circumstances that condemned Australia to being a 'sheeprun' (rather than a civilised, progressive society) capped this inferiority. Such experience, Clark suggests, is the lot of all colonial people.

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3. Clark describes the reactions of becoming aggressively 'colonial' or sycophantically Anglophile.

   Thus, one response is for colonists to cope with the resentment and hostility of being trapped in this way by denying inferiority through absurd boasting, cruel mockery of the depraved and corrupt dandies of civilisation, and refusal to accept responsibility for their circumstances. Another way is to try as much as possible to be the same as the people 'at the centre' of civilisation, and to become the toadies and flunkies of the British, aping their life styles and values. These reactions may be seen as the grounding for what would later be the assertive 'Ocker' style, versus the precious 'Britishness' of some of the middle class and some intellectuals.

SAQ 8 (p.41)

1. The European emigrant societies - Canada, New Zealand, Australia - the archetype being the U.S.A.

   The 'new societies' were offshoots of European colonial powers: emigrant societies, populated and established by European migration (e.g. Canada, New Zealand, Australia) rather than dependencies whose native populations were subordinated, and which were administered purely for purposes of economic exploitation (e.g. India). The archetypal 'new society' was the United States, since it was the oldest, biggest, and most advanced, and had already established its independence of the 'old country'.

2. No, the reason being that this tactic also defined 'Australia' in terms of things other than those unique to this country and its community.

   White points out that the implication of 'new society' status was to deny Australia an independent identity: the less it was like Britain, the more it was like the United States, and vice versa. Hence, the 'Australian' case at this time was founded not on national sentiment, nor self-confidence about being distinctively Australian; rather, it was simply a growing colony at some stage on the road taken by all British colonies, a road best exemplified by the United States.

3. Yes, 'new societies' were thought to lack social history (cultural depth), to be impeded by democracy's untutored masses, and to be outposts away from the mainstream.

   It was suggested that new societies, by definition, lacked the cultural depth to produce art and literature of an acceptable standard. Further the ability to attain excellence was impeded by the democracy of new societies: democracy, because it involved the 'tyranny

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of the majority' limited cultural activity to enlightening the masses rather than encouraging individual achievement. The (romantic) notion of 'art for art's sake' was supposedly under threat in societies where the philistine majority (through democratic processes) could become the cultural arbiters and settle for mediocrity rather than the excellence demanded by an aristocratic elite. Thus, democracy and 'high culture' were incompatible. Further, to the extent that new societies continued to regard themselves as outposts of the empire, they could hardly fail to consider themselves cut off from the cultural mainstream, and to regard their achievements as secondary. (See particularly White, pp.52-57.)

SAQ 9 (p.43)

1. Here it would be appropriate to mention categorisation (White, pp.64-66), and the idea of progress (White, pp.66-72). You might also mention the rise of nationalism, and the importance attributed to character (see White, p.65), although arguably these are part of the interest in categorisation.

   The chief preoccupations which White identifies are the obsession with categorisation which dominated science, and the belief in progress. The notion of 'national type' has to be seen as the product of this obsession with categorisation: the category 'national type' could be used as an explanation of success and failure (superior races succeed). Further, the notion of 'progress' (it stemmed from Enlightenment rationalism and the belief that things could be changed for the better; it was bolstered by the experience of success - and profit - of the rising middle class whose control of industrial technology was specific to the development of capitalism; it was enshrined in the philosophy of liberal democracy which was to lead to 'better' social relations) naturally assimilated Darwin's theory of evolution. The races, it was argued, were progressing towards perfection. The success of particular 'types' was in fulfilment of a natural higher law. It was precisely through the adoption of this terminology that Australians could find means for explaining themselves, and indicating distinctions from other national types.

2. It gave a focus to local patriotism, justified expansion (and exploitation of other peoples), and reaffirmed the British connection - note the links of all of these with sport and war (White, pp.72-76).

   The notion of 'national type' fulfilled, first, the purpose of categorisation and explanation for an increase in self-conscious local patriotism. Second, it helped to justify the darker side of the colonial experience: the belief in superior races and their

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inherent moral supremacy could be used to justify imperial expansion and, in particular, the exploitation and dispossession of other (inferior) peoples - like the Aborigines. Third, it provided a way of legitimating the British connection via 'the crimson thread of kinship' (racial purity was important), while at the same time preserving distinctions - the Australian was a different 'type' formed by the heroic experiences of the frontier (see White, pp.63-72).

3. The characteristics you should mention are clearly listed in White, pp.76-77 (and see below). White notes their derivation from the conflict between generations, and from the values of popular literature.

   The characteristics of 'the Australian type' were alleged to be independence, manliness, a fondness for sport, egalitarianism, a dislike of mental effort, self-confidence, and disrespect for authority (White, pp.76-77). White argues that these characteristics were derived from (a) the particular nature of the conflict between generations in the colony (see White, p.77) - they could be ascribed to the age-old dismay with which one generation greets the ascendancy of the next; and (b) the values of the new popular literature of the day - the literature of mass literacy and democracy which gave special place to national efficiency, and elevated the adventurer, ready to take up the burden of progress and the empire. The fictional archetype was Kipling's 'coming man' - encapsulating precisely the same characteristics as were said to be distinctively Australian - but who was appropriate to an imagination of the frontier of white settlement anywhere in the world.

SAQ 10 (p.44)

1. You might refer to some, or all, of the following points in Crawford's argument: the disruption of old social divisions; the social fluidity and opportunities for sudden wealth, an influx of migrants with radical ideas opposing aristocratic elites.

   The 'hopeful unsettlement' involved in migration seems linked with readiness to compromise and the disruption of old social divisons. The hostility of class conflict is real, but mediated by the opportunities and avenues that open up on the frontier - in fact most political demands are relatively quickly met. The fluidity of colonial society, and the chances of rapid social mobility (provided by, for instance, sudden riches in the gold rushes) suggest that chance and the willingness to capitalise on opportunity are as important as inherited position. A large influx of migrants chasing better opportunities and attracted by the gold rushes brought in a wave of workers with radical opinions. The

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philosophy of liberal democracy, becoming increasingly influential in parallel with Australia's development, was opposed to any aristocratic elite. Those who attempted to fabricate such an elite were easily undermined because their pretensions were not sanctioned by any tradition in this 'new' society. But this egalitarian outlook was not proletarian: its values were the bourgeois values of security, comfort, and at least the opportunity to win place and possessions. It was egalitarian in opposing any barrier of social traditions to the general achievement of those aims.

2. Crawford argues that there was nothing else distinctively Australian that could capture the imagination.

   The bush ethos was distinctive, not representative. But when Australians turned from Britain in search of some element unique to life in this country, and in particular when artists sought inspiration from distinctively Australian sources, where could they find them, argues Crawford, but in the bush? These artists, particularly the writers of the Sydney *Bulletin*, made the bush accessible to all Australians and gave it expressive meaning for all Australians. Because it filled an imaginative need, it entered the Australian consciousness and <u>became</u> the Australian legend.

3. (i) White argues that it has its basis in the values of popular literature; Crawford, that it evolved out of the Australian experience. (ii) White sees it as a delusion - negative because it serves particular sectional interests; Crawford sees it as a positive point for self-reference.

   In White's view, Australians appeared to be deluding themselves, 'inventing' a type which was constructed from the values of a broad popular literature rather than from anything Australian. White wants to undercut the legend. Crawford, in constrast, represents the old school who argued that the values encapsulated in the national character had a basis in the Australian experience of the bush. Further, for him - though the type (or character) is a myth - it is a tool for self-reference essential to the development of self-confidence and a distinctive culture. You will be dealing in much more detail with the properties of myth in course HP02a *The Bush Legend*.

<u>SAQ 11</u> (p.45)

1. The answer should emphasise the professionalisation of the intelligentsia in this period.

   The decisive transition was the professionalisation of the intelligentsia in Western society: science, art, and

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literature were no longer pursuits of monied amateurs, but full-time careers attracting a living wage. For writers and artists, this meant aiming at a new market - the purpose had to be that of attracting and entertaining the masses. It also involved the emergence of a large new community of professional artists and writers in Australia who were, in one sense, compelled to create something to sell.

2. Rebellion was against (i) the older generation, and (ii) the critics - involving in both cases rejection of the established (British) standards. A new and positive image of Australia - based on a cluster of 'distinctive' symbols from the bush - was generated, but this was nothing more than a frame for urban preconceptions.

   The new writers and artists, as part of their assertion of professional status, claimed that art was their province alone and they rebelled against the 'critics' who were the cultural arbiters of the old elite. This represented a rebellion against the cultural establishment and its standards. At the same time, they rejected the bourgeois 'cultural evangelists' - who, we saw, introduced museums, galleries, universities and mass education to the colonies - on the grounds that they were philistines and boors (in other words, being amateurs, they had no business meddling in the arts). White represents this as a general pattern. But in Australia, this general pattern entailed rebelling against British values (since these were the values of the cultural establishment) and rebelling against the previous generation of the bourgeoisie who were not predominantly Australian-born. These impulses gelled with the first conscious attempts to create a distinctive national culture. The intelligentsia of this period, many of whom were Australian-born, couched this rebellion in terms of an indigenous Australian culture: irreverence was their starting point. A cluster of symbols associated with Australia were taken as the reference point for their revolt. But while 'the bush' provided the distinctiveness they sought, it was no more than a frame for their preconceptions: they projected their own values - radicalism, male comradeship, freedom from conventional restraints - on to the bush, and represented this as the 'real' Australia.

3. The intelligentsia had to make their efforts pay, and so were intent on popularising and promoting the nationalist image that they chose to represent as the most distinctive and authentic. Arguably, they were concerned to push what would 'sell', rather than to find a 'real' national identity.

   A professional concern with protection of the local literary product, and with making writing pay, led to emphasis upon 'the Australian product' and to the

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self-advertisement of the intelligentsia (who promoted each other as the only true interpreters of Australia). Their own career interests were served by adopting and popularising a nationalist interpretation of Australian cultural development, and suggesting that all other versions were artifically contrived. They were seeking support for the local cultural industry: there was a strong link between their economic self-interest and their nationalist credentials.

SAQ 12 (p.46)

1. Davison refers to neo-realism; the mix of ballad conventions and colloquialism; and apocalyptic, quasi-religious rhetoric.

   The first influential style was that of Charles Dickens: lurid, neo-realist, and melodramatically antipathetic to the city. The second influence was the adoption of ballad conventions and colloquial speech by George Simms in pursuing the theme of rural innocence and 'urban degeneration'. The third influence was the tradition of rhetorical, quasi-religious verse in which the city became an almost apocalyptic symbol of corruption and exploitation.

2. Because it appealed to the prejudices arising out of the intelligentsia's unhappy circumstances in the city.

   Davison suggests that the third of these styles became predominant because of a deepening sense of urban alienation among these writers around 1890. Reference to White (p.89) confirms what Davison argues: that the new intelligentsia had a marginal and precarious existence - and the depression of the 1890s hit them hard. They were forced into the poorest areas of the city and had good reason to complain. Davison suggests that 'careful attention to the chronology of their writings discloses the connection between their increasingly dismal view of the city and the rise of the bush ideal'.

SAQ 13 (p.47)

1. The radicals, the middle-class nativist moderates, and the upper-class Anglo-Australian loyalists.

   The three mainstreams of colonial opinion identified by Blackton are: the radicals (egalitarian, materialistic, republican, socialist, intent on opposing Empire loyalty and the influence of the 'mother country'), the middle-class nativist moderates (conscious of their identification with the environment and of a native outlook, intent on the unity of the colonies as a nation, seeing independence as the change from an

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autonomous British colony to British ally), and the Anglo-Australian loyalists (at the social and economic apex, ready to declare their Australianism, but acknowledging a higher Empire loyalty, ambitious for British honours conferred 'at Home', preferring a responsible elite under the wing of the British crown, regarding egalitarian nationalism as almost treasonous). The class differences between the groups holding these opinions are evident: the radicals found their strength in the mass of bush and industrial workers, although with middle-class leadership and the participation of the new intelligentsia; the nativist moderates were essentially of the cautious middle class; the Anglo-Australian loyalists were from the educated gentry, commanding the large pastoral holdings (the 'Squatter' was their touchstone), controlling the financial centres, clubs, universities, and entrees to Government House.

2. Your answer might refer to the convict question, the issue of democracy, attitudes to landholding, independence from Britain, the economy and the role of labour, participation in foreign wars and federation. For the radicals, the correct stance on any issue was determined by their vision of Australia as an independent democratic country; the moderates (proto-nationalists) saw Australia instead as ideally autonomous, but nonetheless part of the British 'family'; while loyalists reserved their highest loyalty for the Empire in which Australia was simply a component.

   Adherents of the different streams of opinion took up charactersitic stances on all key issues: Blackton identifies their divergence on those issues listed above. It is not to our advantage to run through all of these here, though it would be in your interests to jot down some notes on all of them. Let's give, instead, just a couple of instances. In the 1850s the Anglo-Australian loyalists struggled to keep convict labour because it was cheap, and they favoured outright suppression of radicals - aiming to keep power in the hands of an oligarchy of pastoralists (squatters) and commercial leaders. The radicals favoured revolution against Britain to end the convict blight (and coincidentally to better workers' conditions, since convict labour obviously undercut them), and demanded the fullest democracy precisely in order to wrest power from the land-owning oligarchy. But the moderates, motivated by nativist sentiment, though determined to keep within constitutional bounds, worked through compromise (with some radicals) to end convict transportation and to block the aristocratic schemes of the oligarchy. Attitudes towards the use of coloured labour (Chinese and Kanakas) split again in terms of economic interests: wealthy landowners saw obvious advantages, workers opposed them as a threat to their

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livelihood - but what was essentially an economic clash gave rise to virulent racism on the part of radicals, and considerable ill-treatment of coloured groups. Towards the end of the century, Australian ventures into overseas military operations evoked predictable, almost knee-jerk reactions: hearty approval by the loyalist elite, cautious acquiescence from the middle class, and strong opposition from radicals who abhorred futile sacrifice in the service of a misguided loyalty to the Empire (Blackton points out, however, that a naive, romantic militarism occasionally surfaced in radical quarters: the image of the citizen-in-arms eventually subduing the legions of tyranny was the source of this).

It is clear that underlying these divisions, there were quite different perceptions of 'Australia': that is to say, the competing groups erected different ideals and visions of the future as, in each case, the 'true' Australia. For the loyalists, it was a component in a larger British Empire which demanded a higher loyalty. For the moderate proto-nationalists, it was a 'child' of the 'mother-country' which had now developed its own interests and should be given the independence to pursue them as an autonomous ally (although continuing to recognise 'family' loyalties). For the radicals, 'Australia' was the locus for an almost utopian dream of democracy, in distinct opposition to the corrupt traditions of the 'old world' which were to be entirely rejected. It is also clear that the competing sets of ideas and ideals about 'Australia' served quite specific interests - especially when the clash over issues (e.g. convict labour, coloured labour) boiled down to a specifically economic contest.

3. Essentially, because the radical movement was disrupted and fragmented in this period, and the Labor Party which subsequently emerged sought marginal reform within the existing system, and was preoccupied with protecting the interests of its followers. This left the field to the moderates.

Federation was the middle-class road to nationhood. Radicals opposed it for many reasons - among them being the fact that the scheme proposed did not lead to the creation of a republic, but of a federal government which still had constitutional links with the parliament at Westminister and indeed gave reserve powers to the monarch's representative, the Governor-General. But the radicals were in disarray in the 1890s. Blackton points to the philosophical divisions that were beginning to appear in their ranks at that time. Above all, the labour movement was fragmented by the defeat of a series of strikes in the early 1890s, at the start of a major depression. The resulting loss of momentum and disunity seemed only to be overcome by the emergence of the Labor Party, but this was a party committed to working within the existing political system, to achieving reforms of

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benefit to the working class. It was not a republican party. Leadership on nationalist issues therefore passed to the moderates of the middle class; it was their vision of 'Australia' which was to be decisive in forming the federal compact.

SAQ 14 (p.52)

You might mention here the process of invention (of images of 'Australia'), evidence of indecision or ambivalence about what is to constitute Australia, and the way these poets so aptly mirror certain opinion groups.

Each of these poets works in terms of a vision or ideal - an invention of Australia. They might very aptly be divided into opinion groups, such as the radicals (the later O'Dowd, Lawson), the moderate proto-nationalists (Gay), the pessimistically ambivalent (the earlier O'Dowd, Hope). Throughout all of these works a consistent question (explicit with O'Dowd and Hope, implicit in the rest) is how to incorporate European origins with the Australian experience to arrive at a distinctive culture. Lawson's assertively brash colonial, and Gay's consciously 'civilised' middle-class spokesman echo once more the categories (and reactions) suggested by Clark (reading 9, and see SAQ 7:3). But O'Dowd and Hope bring the problem of dealing with this conflict into full focus - giving poetic expression to a recurring element in the debate.

SAQ 15 (p.55)

1. Australia's autonomy was defined in terms of continuing ties with Britain.

   White points out that the new Commonwealth was not sovereign, but was heavily constrained by continuing ties with Britain; it had no power to declare war or peace, could not enter foreign treaties, and had no diplomatic status abroad. The British monarch remained formal head of State; the Governor-General (her representative) retained wide discretionary powers; Commonwealth law could be overturned by British legislation; the highest court of appeal remained the British Privy Council; the national anthem was England's. Australia had a new status, a new independence, but only within the context of a continuing relationship with Britain; it was a status that was precisely and formally defined.

2. Economic (protection of local industry and jobs), and political (appeal to consensus, denying the legitimacy of dissent).

   The two impulses generating overt patriotism were (a) that it could be associated with increasing loca

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manufacturing, encouraging Australians to buy the local product, and hence protecting local industry and its workers' jobs; (b) that it promoted national unity at a time when sections of the labour movement were increasingly militant and class conscious. Thus, when some sections of the working class began to realise that their interests were not served by acquiescing in a consensus dominated by the middle class, the appeal to patriotism denied the legitimacy of the pursuit of sectional interests. Patriotism, in White's argument, functioned to thwart the emergence of class interests, in effect serving the middle class.

3. The new images identified by White are those of Minerva (the classical convention of the idealised young woman), and 'the little boy from Manly'.

   Minerva brought to mind the daughter (relationship with England), the approach of maturity and her potential - but also qualities of beauty, innocence and vulnerability which had to be protected. The 'little boy from Manly' was used to typify well-meant impetuosity, independence and generosity (of the young nation) - but he too was vulnerable to threats from an evil, outside world. The images could be used in slightly different ways by different ruling interests: imperially minded pastoralists could use the first to stress continued dependence on the 'parent' country; manufacturers could make use of the second, encouraging the 'youngster' to break maternal bonds, implying that industrialisation was as inevitable as the child's growth. But both images encouraged the populace to unite to defend against threats - denying the legitimacy of dissent and the pursuit of sectional interests, which had the effect of denying class divisions and conflict. Thus, these images served the dominant economic interests.

SAQ 16 (p.56)

1. 'The digger' was not unique, but instead was said to display the same qualities as had been previously the mark of other versions of the national type.

   White points out that C.E.W. Bean, the war historian who did more than anybody to articulate the image of 'the digger', appropriated the legendary qualities of 'the bushman' (which Bean himself had been celebrating in journalism since the early 1900s) and made them the distinctive qualities of the Australian soldier. White also argues that the conventional qualities of 'the coming man' (see chapter 5) were attributed to 'the digger'.

2. No, a pre-existing ideal was seen as being substantiated there.

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The qualities of 'the digger' were preordained. They were not discovered by observing the Australian soldier in action. National pride demanded that 'the digger' be a hero, and that he display the conventionally heroic qualities of the idealised 'new man'. In a crude sense, here we had a myth looking for a place to happen! 'With the landing at Gallipoli in April 1915, the ready-made myth was given a name, a time, and a place.'

3. At least four functions are distinguished: 'the digger' legend was seen to confirm the qualities of the national type, was used as an ideal of 'Australianness', was manipulated by different economic sectors in self-serving ways, and provided a focus for defensiveness.

(a) 'The digger' represented the successful testing of the national type: war was seen on all sides as the ultimate test of fibre. So he served to confirm national pride: it was argued that after this test Australia could take a proud place on the international stage. Here, then, was a core to the national legend (though it remained the bush legend: the digger's superiority was a product of the bush and a rural economy). And celebration of the digger's sacrifice (affirming the legendary core) with the institution of Anzac Day provided a quasi-religious ceremonial focus for a secular society. Because this is the ceremony that evokes affirmation of a national legend, some have suggested that Anzac Day should be the date for celebration of Australia Day (see section 2 of the course).

(b) 'The digger' provided a 'real' ideal, and so could serve as the upholder of what it meant to be Australian. By extension, 'the digger' served as the custodian of a certain idea of nationhood.

(c) 'The digger' was an image that could be manipulated by various vested interests to serve their ends. White shows how conservative business interests evoked him to condemn 'those who would sow the seeds of discord' and to boost production. Pastoralists made much of his rural connection (emphasised by Bean) to suggest that the country was the 'real' Australia, and to serve their economic interests. An urban paper, *Smith's Weekly*, portrayed him as a white-collar worker with a larrikin streak. In short, vested interests tried to take over the legend and remake the image along lines congenial to their own interests.

(d) 'The digger' provided a focus for defensiveness. The R.S.L. concentrated on this aspect, and did much to elevate defensiveness as a continuing preoccupation of the nation. But 'the digger' was also used to symbolise law and order, and (again) to make sectional divisions appear illegitimate. Demands for change were

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represented as selfish and disloyal: going against all that the diggers had fought for.

4. The technological and intellectual 'expert' became the leading 'type' at this time.

   The demand for national efficiency characteristic of the period between the wars accentuated the call for intellectual and technological skills, and so the scientist, the engineer, the expert came to replace the common man as the hope of the world. Hence a new intellectual elite emerged, that was highly educated, and saw itself as providing intellectual leadership.

SAQ 17 (p.58)

1. You might refer here to the wholesome virgin, always under threat of attack (defilement? rape?).

   The dominant image of the 1920s was of Australia - clean, chaste, young, sane and wholesome - being assailed by external evils. The pervasive image was of disease, flood, and war. In an evil world, only Australia with her British heritage was safe. Threats were external, and the solution was to keep them out - hence national life was marked by immigration restrictions, tariff protection, censorship, hysterical anti-communism.

2. You should mention (a) the demands of big business for an image more appropriate to an urban, industrial society; (b) America's interest in encouraging Australian nationalism in order to thwart Britain; and (c) the renewed vitality of the intelligentsia.

   (a) Though the depression initially intensified isolationism and paranoia, White points out that big business eventually emerged stronger and more influential. Indeed, at the heart of the pressure for a new image was the demand of a powerful industrial sector for an image more attuned to its intentions. The rural image of 'innocence' was not conducive to a society with an extensive industrial base; people had to be persuaded to see themselves as sophisticated, urban, 'mature'. To the extent that local manufacturing was in competition with Britain, the industrialists emphasised nationalist views, advocating a strong, independent Australia.

   (b) America, now a powerful trading nation on the world scene, could see distinct advantages in fostering Australian nationalism - as a means of breaking up the Empire trade arrangements (which were favourable to Britain), and because a more independent Australia promised to lead to closer relations with the United States (as Australia moved away from Britain, she would come into the U.S. sphere of influence).

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(c) The third factor was the renewed vitality of the intelligentsia. This was conditioned by the encouragement of the industrial elite (who wished to facilitate a more sophisticated image and saw the intelligentsia as the means for this), and by an active American stimulation of intellectual life (intended to challenge the 'crown colony' psychology). None the less, the intelligentsia's own efforts played a part in the demolition of the old image.

3. It might be pointed out that the 'Australian type' re-emerged because of a renewed search for 'the essential Australia', and because of the competitive imagery and patriotism of war. After the war, this imagery seemed overworked and inappropriate - Nazi ideas of an Aryan master race had discredited the notion.

   The intellectuals claimed (and Vance Palmer, whose work you will read soon, is one of them) that there was an essential Australia not expressed in the present circumstances. The available symbol of this was the legend of the nineties and the bush ethos, so they began to celebrate <u>again</u> the 'national type'. At the same time, the demands of the Second World War, and the threat (and competitive imagery) of 'the Hun', and 'the Jap' gave a new vitality to the 'national type' (who would counter the threat). The demands of total war also gave strong stimulus to nationalism and democracy, for obvious reasons.

   After the war, the traditional images of digger and bushman had been overworked (the latter, anyway, had been given a socialist heritage by the academic nationalists). The search for a new ideal type of manhood (to give the core to nationhood) led to the symbolic adoption of 'the lifesaver'. However, events were no longer favourable to this 'type' - it had always been the antithesis of urban pretensions and decadence and so was not congruent with the search for sophistication. The war also helped discredit the whole idea of a national type: it was uncomfortably close to Nazi ideas of an Aryan master race - the very thing that we had fought to defeat in a bitter world conflict.

<u>SAQ 18</u> (p.58)

1. In the post-war decades of relative affluence, appeals to the concrete benefits of 'the way of life' could replace the tarnished ideal of 'the national type', and serve as a new way of rallying defence of the status quo.

   As the notion of 'national type' became a problem, there was a swing to explaining nationhood in terms of the benefits (particularly the material benefits) of the way of life it fostered. The problems of self-appraisal

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could be avoided by concentration upon concrete goals. The purpose of 'the way of life' as a notion was to evoke unquestioning defence of the status quo: unless it was supported, all these good things could be lost. Thus it provided a bulwark against communism, against change, against cultural diversity; it could call forth a common emotional response in defence of what we have. Hence it could also be used to bludgeon migrants into conforming: if you wish to enjoy the benefits of living here, you must adopt the 'way of life'. Similarly, it denied diversity among Australians themselves: cultural differences were an affront (and a threat) to a society which demanded uniformity. But it also served economic purposes: as a notion depending upon material things, it encouraged (and was identified with) consumerism. The ideal way of life was identified with possessions: home, car, refrigerator, washing machine, and so on. So it served the expanding manufacturing sector by enhancing consumer demand.

2. The suburban ideal provided the decisive shift away from rural imagery to the city.

   This produced, at least for a time, a new ideal which was in keeping with the economic conditions of the period - seemingly the image that manufacturers had been seeking since the late 1930s.

SAQ 19 (p.60)

In this case, a brief initial summary of a possible answer is not feasible. There is an array of possible contenders under each heading, but let me give a model answer by referring to some of the less important ones (you will be dealing with the more important ones in your assessment essay!).

Image of place: 'hell upon earth'. Circumstances - characterised the brutal convict system established as the first settlement; the mysterious nature of the new continent (where natural conditions reversed established European expectations); the colony as a place of exile. Served as an instrument in the control of working-class crime in Britain (horror as deterrent).

Image of ideal type/individual: 'the coming man'. Circumstances - characterised the imagined virtues of the frontier type. Values arose out of the new popular literature of the day (importance of mass literacy). The man of action (getting things done) sharply distinguished from the moralising liberal intellectuals - in fact served to legitimate imperialist expansion, pushing out the frontiers of the Empire, exploiting new lands (and other races).

Image symbolising 'the people': 'Minerva'. Circumstances - captured imagined qualities of an innocent, trusting

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people, still dependent, but about to achieve independence. Strong reminder of the vulnerability of innocence and purity - intended to engender a defensive unity.

Image of material benefits: 'the way of life'. Circumstances - disillusionment with grand ideas and national types (both these discredited by Second World War). Symbolised the concrete benefits of our form of national organisation - possessions taken as indicators of quality of life. Provided incentive to consumerism (integral to post-war economic reconstruction) and unity in defence of what we had; provided disincentive to dissent or intellectual pursuits. Positive support of status quo.

SAQ 20 (p.61)

1. Your answer should deal with the fact that Palmer still seems to believe in the ideas promoted by the journalists of the time.

   White (pp.106-109) concentrates on the attempts of the intelligentsia in the 1890s to 'make a legend', and shows that self-advertisement was integral to the 'new journalism'. Palmer, seeking for the sources of the 1890s legend, cannot find concrete literary or artistic evidence - he finds himself limited to the journalism! Nonetheless he affirms 'the legend', though wishing to suggest it is more broadly based in time, and that the journalism reflects the ideals and aspirations of the people. If White is right, then perhaps Palmer is deceived in taking journalistic evidence at face value.

2. The pertinent contrast here is between Palmer's idea that the Australian people in the latter half of the nineteenth century were united in their ideals and aspirations, and the suggestion by writers such as Blackton that there were divisions of opinion - and at least one opinion group which placed Empire loyalty higher than nationalism.

   Palmer suggests 'there is no doubt that ... the Australian people were acutely aware of their isolation, and were determined to turn to account the freedom it gave them by building up something like an earthly paradise for the common man.' Other writers we have looked at would suggest there is considerable doubt about such a claim! To take up Blackton's article, for instance, of the three opinion groups mentioned there, only the radical nationalists' views would be anything like those Palmer represents as common to 'the Australian people'. The loyalists, in contrast, placed Empire loyalty higher than a 'new' Australia, and even the middle-class moderate proto-nationalists were not isolationist, given their emphasis upon retaining British links, acting within the constitution, and so on. In effect, Palmer is insisting there was a

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consensus - this time a left-wing one - when there is evidence for competing bodies of opinion.

3. Reference should be made to Palmer's emphasis upon isolationism versus White's emphasis upon the permeation of European (particularly British) influences.

   The most striking disparity between Palmer and White is that Palmer's argument depends on the view that Australians at this time were consciously isolationist, determinedly working at an 'invention' (a future 'Australia') of their own devising and rejecting outside influences; while White, in extreme contrast, argues that the materials of the 'invention' were largely borrowed from elsewhere (the values of popular literature, the romantic image of the frontier as refuge from the city, metropolitan radicalism, etc.) and owed little to distinctively Australian experience. Of course, for White, too, there were competing versions of 'Australia', serving different interests; for Palmer, the 1890s represented the last time an 'Australian people' was united in the national cause.

SAQ 21 (p.62)

You should refer to the problem represented by Tom Collins as, again, that of reconciling the 'native' legend with the European heritage in order to be Australian.

Collins represents the 'mateship' of the 1890s, but this is shown to be a thin base for culture, indeed a source of vulgarity. Mateship also served not only as a comforter in a foreign environment, but as a blind to conceal the way in which European man in Australia turned to ravaging the land. It is as if, bereft of the 'civilised' values (that is, cut off from the European heritage), the pioneers went on a rampage of exploitative destruction - and then erected the gaudy monuments of Australian society to hide their guilt and despair. The elite, scornful of this vulgarity, continued to emulate the European conventions, while 'the people' aped the mate's ideal - there was a rift in national life. Tom Collins did not provide enough, so he is culpable - but the alternative (a return to an artificial Europeanness) is worse ('we are thankful for you and your ideal').

SAQ 22 (p.63)

You would be expected to mention the uncritical deference to imported ideas and cultural objects.

The 'cultural cringe' refers to an unthinking admiration for everything foreign (especially English), and a corollary tendency to try to assess everything local in terms of foreign standards. There is always therefore a barrier

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between ourselves and the local object - we do not respond to it openly. The 'cringe' therefore has the effect of precluding regard for any excellence that may be found at home.

SAQ 23 (p.65)

1. Your answer should centre on McQueen's assertion that, as a British offshoot, Australia is derivative, dependent, and closed.

   The argument runs: Australia - an imperialist outpost rather than a colony - is derivative, dependent, and closed. Its derivativeness impedes the development of an appropriate relationship to our environment (remember Phillips's notion of 'the minatory Englishman' sitting between us and our experience). Dependence stops us taking initiatives - we look for innovations from outside, from 'the old country' (or from 'great and powerful friends') to solve local problems. Because the society has been repressively homogeneous - and we have seen in our other readings how and why this came about - it is 'closed' to the sort of currents that would give rise to an internal critique. The central argument is that 'Australia is not a society in its own right, and can never be understood by searching for the truly Australian essence' (which puts paid to Palmer, Crawford, Ward, Phillips, et.al.!).

2. An answer should depend upon McQueen's argument concerning Australia's fortuitous position in 'the capitalist world order'.

   The basis of our privileged position has been the reliance of the economy on primary products which brought high returns for low investment. We have been dependent upon major capitalist imperial powers to buy these products (first England, then America, now Japan), but nonetheless have been able to maintain the lifestyle of a developed Western country without suffering the privations, dislocation and social division that the older countries experienced to get there. (You will recall that immigrants came to Australia from Britain precisely to escape such effects of the Industrial Revolution in England.) The strong central administration (a hangover from the colonial days) and 'tame-cat' unionism that resulted from relatively good conditions have led to social passivity. But the effects of this have been felt in a strongly anti-theoretical streak in national life. The practical success of Australian capitalism was to do wholly with our special position in the imperialist system (supplier of resources to the major powers). But the fact that rewards flowed on relatively smoothly meant that theory never became an issue: 'People become interested in theory when they encounter problems which cannot be

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resolved ... in practice.' Australia's relative immunity from the ravages of war and economic privation has meant that Australians have avoided prolonged periods of self-questioning. The result: we are ill-equipped to think about social problems. There is a proclivity to action without thought. There is a tendency to rely upon rules rather than reason - and when people break rules, there can be punishment (even violence), since deviance is not tolerated. When real problems are encountered, reformers (not equipped to think on the large scale, or theoretically) resort to piecemeal social tinkering. Even critics on the left import their theories.

3. You might argue that we remained, culturally, a colony - unable to prevent permeation by every influence from the 'metropolitan' centres because we shared their language.

   In McQueen's terms, because we speak English, the language of the major powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (England, then America), we had no barrier to stave off direct penetration. Cut off from the ferment that produced major critiques in those countries, we were nonetheless open to every vogue of the English and American mainstream, and precluded from producing anything unique and resilient of our own.

SAQ 24 (p.66)

1. I would make reference to Clark's discussion of (a) the separation of the states (R18:1-6); (b) the material advances which have distanced us from the privations of the pioneers and made their traditions incomprehensible to us (R18:5-8,11-12); (c) our failure to make the break with Britain (R18:7-10); and (d) our lack of systems of belief about God, or man (R18:9-12). These are headings for problem areas, but you may wish to give more prominence to specific issues Clark mentions within these areas.

   (a) The separation of the states and different practices in each state made it difficult to say who, or what, an Australian is. Despite political unification, we lacked the unity of practices in everyday life that made a nation. We had no agreement about a common experience, (apart from the ambiguity of Anzac Day) and so no common reference point.

   (b) Arriving at nationhood at the time when industrialisation conferred the material benefits of life with relatively little struggle, we were so removed by the condition of our life from the few traditions of the pioneers - who had arrived at their ideas through pain and struggle - that their fictional expressions of 'the Australian' were an embarrassment. We saw these

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characterisations as 'phoney' Australians, but - corrupted by hedonism and consumerism - gave no thought to how to replace the traditions we had outgrown.

(c) Our failure to break away, to sever the ties with Britain, has left us perpetually bound to compromise, to a partial identity as British-Australians.

(d) Having our origins at the time of the Enlightenment, we have been deprived of any body of belief about the nature of God, or man. Such mythologies provide a frame for thinking about 'what it is all about'. Australians, lacking this, lack models for thinking about the nature of experience.

2. Reference should be made to the suggestion by both writers that Australia has been rendered incapable of dealing with harsh realities by the luck of having achieved relative affluence without struggle.

Clark and McQueen seem agreed that the chance prosperity of Australia has corrupted Australians with hedonism and consumerism, leaving them ill-equipped to think about the larger questions of life, or to deal with their predicament as the flow of material benefits dries up.

SAQ 25 (p.72)

It would be wise to list Gammage's elements, and to jot down against them any points of congruence with White. Thus, for instance:

(i) (Gammage) Historians look at the past in terms dictated by the present. (White) New versions of 'Australia' arise because of the demands of present (economic) circumstances.

(ii) (Gammage) National traditions are the creations of writers rather than recreations of the past. (White) Versions of Australia are the creations of the intelligentsia, and will be influenced by their circumstances in the present (including the demands associated with the intellectual career, see e.g. White, chapter 6).

(iii) (Gammage) Traditions take hold not because they are true, but because they appeal to a consensus. (White) There is no 'real' Australia waiting to be discovered, versions of 'Australia' succeed only in so far as they can be manipulated to create a consensus.

(iv) (Gammage) Consensus is the nearest one can or needs to approach to truth. (White) The emergence and manipulation of images is a factor in a debate whose aim is consensus (that serves the status quo) rather than truth.

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(v) (Gammage) Traditions succeed when they explain the present, and begin to fail when the present changes. (White) Versions of 'Australia' are continually fractured, questioned, and redefined as circumstances change.

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